Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

Notes of the Month
THE HOUR OF AWAKENING

Zilliacus APPEASEMENT & ARMAGEDDON

Hutt LABOUR AND THE CRIPPS CAMPAIGN

Pollitt KARL MARX

APRIL 1939 SIXPENCE

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CONTENTS

Page

Notes of the Month 195

THE HOUR OF AWAKENING

By R. P. D.

Appeasement and Armageddon 217

By K. ZILLIACUS

Labour and the Cripps Campaign 229

By ALLEN HUTT

Karl Marx 239

By HARRY POLLITT

Documents of the Month 247

Stalin's Report to the XVIII. Congress, C.P.S.U.

Book Reviews 253

Rescuing the Classics by F. D. KLINGENDER

A Frenchman Interprets Heine by WALTER CRAMER

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The "Hour of Truth"—Facing Realities—Fascism Nears the Final Gamble—Fuel on the Flames—The Limit of Manœuvres —Our Opportunities Are Growing—Chamberlain's New Pose —The Underwriter of the Fraudulent Bond—Either-Or— Chamberlain's Policy Unchanged—Birmingham Speech—Tone versus Content—Britain and the Soviet Union—Anglo-Nazi Dusseldorf Agreement—Two Policies—"Appeasement" Means War—Britain's War Policy—Stalin on the International Situation—The Balance of Power in New Forms—"Non-Intervention" and the Balance of Power—America's Appeal to the British People—The Lion-Cub Grows Up—Chamberlain's Gamble—Deeds, Not Words—Why Chamberlain Still Holds Power—Lesson of the By-Elections—Labels and Realities— "Socialist" Labels and Chamberlain Contents—Programmes and Hairsplitting—Socialism and Power— Labour Party Disciplinary Issue—Why was Cripps Expelled?—Alice in Wonderland Reasoning— Threats or Free Discussion?—How Fascism Comes —Heal the Breach—Opportunities and Dangers

SO the masks are off. Once again reality breaks through the smokescreen of lies. Once again the Nazi troops are on the march. Where are the Munich promises after the occupation of Prague? Where are the "guarantees" after the physical annihilation of Czechoslovakia from the map? Where is "Non-Intervention" after Minorca and the Casado coup? Where is the whispering-gallery talk of "improvement," of optimism, of peace where a child could see there was no peace? How long can they still go on trying to spread their miasma of lies and platitudes, to stuff cottonwool in the ears of the people, to chloroform them with their Judas press, to gag their lips with the co-operation of the two front bench party machines stifling every independent utterance of their followers—while through the fog sounds, crack after crack, the muffled explosion as one capital city of Europe after another falls to the enemy, and the scores of thousands

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of refugees press against the closed frontiers in desperation and find no escape ? There is a phrase beloved at this moment by Franco and his gentry, and typically derived from the bloodstained arena of the bullring, the " hour of truth "—by which they mean the hour of butchery. The hour of butchery in Europe is indeed the hour of truth for the people of Britain, alike for the criminals, for Chamberlain and his satellites on both sides of Parliament who stand exposed by their handiwork, as for the people it is the hour of truth and awakening.

AT this moment there is no room for any but the coolest hard-headed judgment of realities. Alarm and depression are as out of place as empty-headed optimism. Nothing has happened contrary to expectation, nothing that was not already implicit in Munich and Rome. The plan of the enemies of the people unfolds itself, and will continue to unfold itself until the peoples unite to change the course. Every advance of this plan, while it increases the suffering of millions and makes heavier the future conflict, increases also the contradictions in the enemy camp and the awakening, slow but certain, in the camp of the peoples. If the policy of " appeasement " were a policy of appeasement, capitalism might have some hope of a temporary stability even on the precarious basis of a jackboot reaction. But because the policy of " appeasement " is in reality a policy of extending war, and cannot be otherwise in the face of the developing economic crisis and deepening antagonisms of imperialism, the problems before the reactionaries grow greater with each success.

THE supply of minor victims is not inexhaustible. As it diminishes with each new advance, the outlines of the major conflict for the new division of the world loom closer. The prospects may well affright the most reckless on either side. They manœuvre, they prepare the ground, they build up higher and higher the tottering pyramid of armaments, they concentrate on the preliminaries and the strategic outposts, and still postpone a little further the final issue. But necessity drives them on; they cannot stand still; the

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logic of past policy forces forward each new stage. Fascism can advance; it cannot afford to retreat. " The time is ripe," proclaimed Dr. Ley on March 12, outlining the rich spoils of the colonial empires of Britain and France to be won; " we shall claim what is due to us . . . . If we are cheated out of our rights, developments will follow compared to which Versailles will be but child's play." " The hour has already struck," echoed the Italian " Relazioni Internationali " on the same date, " when the colonial map of the world must be brought up-to-date . . . . Justice can be secured in the most decisive way—by arms." " The old forces of a world economy which can no longer survive," declaimed Dr. Funk at Rome in January, " are realising the danger to which they are exposed from the young forces nurtured on national doctrines, ready for any sacrifice and straining towards a single goal. Those who were rich shall become poor, and those who were poor shall become rich." The aim of the new division of the world is thus expressed with elementary simplicity as the immediate issue. But the conclusion of Dr. Ley's speech revealed the anxiety behind the urgency. " If you go on living in this cramped area, fellow workers," he declared in the customary Nazi demagogic jargon, " you will start fighting each other again, and Marxism will once more raise its head." Therein was expressed the besetting fear which accelerates the drive to expansion. Fascism fears peace, which would lay bare its inner crisis. Even at the same time as it increases its material strength and strategic gains with its new conquests, its inner weakening concurrently grows with the extension of its dominion over unwilling peoples. The only solution is found in further expansion, at a successively hastened tempo, to postpone the reckoning and reach the imagined goal of decisive victory. The sphere for minor conquests is not yet exhausted, but it is narrowing. The issue draws closer when fascism must stake its existence on the gamble of world conquest.

WHAT of the possessing Empires of Britain and France before this dynamic, of the creditor Powers, of the corrupt and decadent finance-capitalist oligarchies led by

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Chamberlain and Daladier, who fear their own peoples more than they fear fascism, who look longingly to fascism as their friend and ally even while it assails them, who see their world trade and dominion crumbling and the new economic crisis creeping over their countries even more rapidly than over the war-economies of fascism, what way out shall they find in this completely new situation of the last stages of imperialist decline? They manœuvre. They offer new and yet again new minor victims to fascism. They throw fuel on the flames, hoping thus to guide the path of the flames. The flames rise higher and draw closer to their own treasuries. The old hoped-for solution of the united alliance of reaction and the grand assault on the Soviet Union as the limitless field of expansion grows more precarious and difficult, as the contradictions within the capitalist world increase and the strength of the Soviet Union grows more formidable to punish any ill-judged attempt. Both sides hesitate and vacillate before the immeasurable consequences of a frontal attack on the Soviet Union, postpone and again postpone the issue, seek other easier paths first, decide to prepare the ground further; and meanwhile the strength of the Soviet Union grows greater.

YET the possessing Powers fear even more the consequences of major imperialist war, to the ultimate benefit of socialism. The warning of 1914-1918 stands before them and fills them with fear. They know that every factor which led to that outcome then exists many times intensified to-day. Can they hope for peace? But they have rejected the path to peace even more decisively; for peace can only be obtained through the union of the democratic and socialist forces, and this they fear even more than war, since the outcome can only lead, with the dread of war once removed, to the releasing of all the forces of the peoples for the inner social issues, to the end of fascism and the end of their own régimes. What remains for them but the policy of "appeasement," which, in the name of short-term postponements and concessions, throws fuel on the flames and hastens the final conflagration? They manœuvre; but they manœuvre at the end of a rope which grows ever shorter. Meanwhile, with

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each new step, the awakening of the peoples advances; the strength of the Soviet Union grows; the United States advances to have its say in the outcome.

OUR difficulties to-day are great. The dangers facing us are great. But the difficulties of the enemy are a hundred times greater. They have involved themselves in a net from which they can find no final solution, either in war or in peace, that does not in the end hasten the advance of all they wish to defeat. *Despite the heavy menace of the present situation, despite the heavy losses, the long toll of victims and the sacrifice of past opportunities through past errors, and the consequent heavy conflicts which have to be faced, our opportunities to turn the world situation to a different channel are to-day greater than ever before, and are growing, provided only the awakening in Britain is not dammed.*

CHAMBERLAIN has to-day reached the point at which he can only seek to escape the charge of criminal treason by pleading licensed lunacy. He pleads that he never expected this outcome of Munich, which everyone foretold for him, that he is bitterly disappointed, that he had really believed Hitler's promises, that he had never read *Mein Kampf* or had no doubt been given to understand that it was really written by one of the wicked democratic calumniators of Hitler, that he sincerely believed he was telling the truth when he said on October 3 that "under the new system of guarantees the new Czechoslovakia will find greater security than she has ever known in the past," or on October 6 that Czechoslovakia will "enjoy in the future and develop a national existence under a neutrality and security comparable to that which we see in Switzerland to-day" (an analogy which was at the time intended as a consolation for Czechoslovakia, but to-day may well send a shudder through Switzerland). Thus he is compelled to adopt the public pose of the foolish old gentleman caught among thieves, and to endeavour to present this as an admirable rôle for a British Prime Minister in whom the public may henceforth place confidence for their security. He is reduced, in short, to the familiar culminating stage of the fraudulent company director who endeavours to

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present himself as a simpleton taken in by sharpers as his last hope to escape being placed in the dock with the gang to which he belongs.

THOSE who believe him will do so at their peril. But the degree of personal honesty or dishonesty of Chamberlain in the past is in itself a secondary question compared to the vast new issues that have arisen—issues that in no case can be left to his handling. For in either case the practical conclusion is the same. *The important point is not that Hitler broke his pledges. The important point is that Chamberlain underwrote Hitler's pledges.* When he solemnly assured the House of Commons on September 28 that "Herr Hitler repeated to me with great earnestness that this was the last of his territorial ambitions in Europe and that he had no wish to include in the Reich people of other races than Germans," he was interrupted by the scornful incredulity of left critics, and he thereon declared: "These are words which count in the long run." The Birmingham industrialist is sufficiently familiar with commercial practice to know that, when the fraudulent bond is exposed, the bigger financial name that underwrote the signature by no means escapes the responsibility, and is even adjudged to hold the heavier responsibility, since without that signature the worthless paper of a notorious and proved rogue would have deceived no one.

OF two things one. Either Chamberlain meant what he said, was sincere when he declared that he believed Hitler's promises, that he believed Czechoslovakia had been saved and held a secure future, and is sincere when he declares that he has now been undeceived and taken by surprise by events. In that case he has convicted himself from his own lips of complete political incapacity and illiterate ignorance of the elementary realities of our period. The soft-hearted may weep tears over a good heart deceived, though they would do better to spare their tears for his victims. But the political conclusion is inescapable. *In that case, on his own showing, his continuance as Prime Minister is a public danger.* Alternatively, he did not believe what he said; he knew it to be false; he deliberately deceived the people, and is continuing

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to deceive them. In that case the conclusion is all the more urgent. For in that case he has placed himself in the rôle of an enemy agent in power, as much as any Henlein or Tiso. He may choose which rôle he prefers. The conclusion is the same. If after this exposure the British people still leave Chamberlain in control of their fortunes, do not break through the barbed-wire entanglement of the two party machines which hold him in power and compel his removal, they would deserve all that that continuance will bring them.

FOR let there be no mistake. *Chamberlain still endeavours to carry on with his basic policy*. That was the one thing that stood out crystal clear from his speech in the House of Commons on the fateful day of the military seizure of Prague. The expressions of mild deprecation, of slightly pained surprise and supposed disillusionment, were mumbled, stilted, unconvincing, smothered with contrary parentheses and apologetics, such as the amazing Hitlerite gramophone repetition by a British Prime Minister that " what has taken place has occurred with the acquiescence of the Czech Goverment." But after this perfunctory introduction, which only succeeded in producing the effect of an incredibly clumsy actor endeavouring to imitate a few sounds and expression appropriate to a man experiencing pain and surprise, what followed in complete contrast, what was confident, clear, downright, positive, certain, was the declaration : " But do not let us on that account be deflected from our course." That sentence was the one decisive sentence of the speech. That is the programme. It is a programme for the continuance of Munich in other forms even though the visible basis of Munich has broken down.

HAS the Birmingham speech changed this ? Does it mark the inauguration of new policy ? The *Manchester Guardian* hopefully believes that it does, and affirms that " it marks a decisive change in our national policy." Yet a critical examination of the speech will reveal nothing that is new in the concrete measures proposed. The language, the tone, the admission of the failure of Munich, the sharp condemnation of Nazi Germany, all this was admittedly designed to " correct

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the mistake" of the House of Commons speech, which had betrayed all too damningly his revealing first thoughts. Psychologically, it is thus an important symptom of the strength of public opinion which had compelled such an expression and "correction." But practically, it is necessary to have something considerably more positive before we throw our hats in the air and acclaim "a decisive change in policy." If the left can be so cheaply appeased by a few rhetorical words and gestures, without the substance of policy being changed, Chamberlainism will never be defeated.

THE positive policy was contained in two declarations. First:

> We ourselves will naturally turn first to our partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and to France, to whom we are so closely bound.

This is the policy of the Anglo-French Alliance to bar the road to the West. It repeats the declaration of solidarity on February 6, and many previous declarations. It is not a new declaration of policy, but has always been an integral part of the Chamberlain policy. It sees the balance of Britain and France on the one side, and of Germany and Italy on the other, leading to the hope of stabilisation in the West and eventual Four Power understanding. All mention of the Soviet Union was conspicuously excluded. That any conception of collective security, of a League policy, was still absolutely rejected, was made explicitly clear by the second declaration:

> I feel bound to repeat that I am not prepared to engage this country by new unspecified commitments operating in conditions which cannot now be foreseen.

The essence of the Chamberlain policy was still expressed in the Birmingham speech.

UNDOUBTEDLY the new approaches between Britain and the Soviet Union are of the utmost importance for the whole international future. Every effort now needs to be directed by the pressure of an awakened public opinion to strengthen and develop these preliminary tentative approaches into a solid and durable outcome, into a real

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understanding and agreement for the common maintenance of peace. But until this goal is achieved, until the basic policy is changed, these gestures, when they are carried out by Chamberlain's Government can still be utilised only as an element in the machinery of the old policy. The threats to Hitler, the hints of possible alignment or flirtations in a rival camp, are, from the standpoint of Chamberlainism, essential weapons of pressure on Hitler to force him into acceptance of the British-Hitler Agreement which is the immediate objective of Chamberlain's policy.

IT was noticeable that in the very midst of the Czech crisis the representatives of the organ of British finance-capital, the Federation of British Industries, were meeting and negotiating an agreement with their Nazi counterparts at Dusseldorf. The President of the F.B.I., returning on March 17, two days after the coup, on the day of Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, declared that "they considered it gratifying that an agreement had been reached with their German counterpart"; and another member of the delegation explained that "the political crisis" had had "no effect on their discussions. The subsequent storm has compelled the holding up of the Dusseldorf Agreement, which was an unconcealed expression of Anglo-German alliance against the United States. But the directing policy of the most powerful sections of finance-capital represented in the F.B.I., which was able to reach such an agreement in the midst of the crisis, was thereby unmistakably revealed. The Government Economic Mission to Berlin has been postponed for the moment as unseemly in the present state of public opinion—but for how long, remains to be seen and will depend in no small part, not only on Hitler's action, but on political developments in Britain. The United States has publicly declared its refusal to recognise the annexation of Czechoslovakia and, according to reports, has retained recognition of the Czech Minister; but the end of the Czech Legation was immediately accepted in London, while the Nazi propaganda headquarters in London continues to receive full protection.

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AT this critical turning point it is essential to recognise clearly the alternatives before the British people. There are two policies, and only two governing policies, between which the choice has to be made. Isolation no longer exists and is ruled out. One policy is the policy of peace: this means the definite agreement between Britain, France and the Soviet Union, with the co-operation of the United States, together with such other States as are willing to accede, for the collective maintenance of peace. Such a policy would still be capable of holding in check the further extension of the war offensive of the fascist Powers, because it means, not a balance, but superiority on the side of the democracies and peace. The agreement of London, Paris, Moscow and Washington means peace. This is the policy of collective security, which is opposed by Chamberlain.

THE alternative policy is that by which Britain seeks to reach an agreement with Germany, Italy and Japan, with the aggressor Powers of the Triple Pact; to play off one grouping against another, to weaken France and build up the strength of Germany, giving Germany a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe, to play off the Triple Pact against the Soviet Union and the United States; to follow the old game of the balance of power in new forms; hoping thus to secure immunity for Britain behind a wall of isolationist rearmament. This is the policy of so-called "appeasement," in reality of war-fomentation, which has operated in practice to bring the international situation through successive worsening and catastrophes to the very edge of the final precipice, and has finally brought the British people also into extreme danger. This is the policy of Chamberlain, which he is still pursuing.

AGAIN and again in these Notes, through the years since the formation of the "National" Government, through the operations of MacDonald and of Baldwin, and especially since the formation of the Chamberlain Government, we have endeavoured to bring out this key rôle of Britain in the advance to world war, comparable in new forms to the same sinister rôle performed by Britain before

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1914, and under the same apparently obscure, vacillating "peace-seeking" cover. We have sought to stress again and again that the rôle of British reaction is by no means the simple rôle of "passivity," "helplessness," "vacillation" and "capitulation," as is sometimes too easily assumed by critics, but has been the decisive factor in the advance to war; that, while the direct war incendiaries are in Berlin, Rome and Tokio, the final war-criminals are to be found in London. It may be appropriate to quote what we wrote a year ago, in April, 1938, after the last "March crisis," on "Britain's War Plan":

> Whoever would understand the realities of the present world situation would do well to watch, not only fascism, but above all the rôle of Britain. Britain is still the predominant world Power, with the most extended interests, the largest reserves of strength on the basis of its Empire, and the most supple and experienced policy. *The apparent dominant initiative of fascism at the present stage reflects the existing balance of international relations, but it does not necessarily reflect the decisive force which has brought that balance into existence and made possible the present rôle of fascism.* The decisive world rôle is still played by British imperialism. This is the heart of the present world situation. All can see the Nazi sword hanging over Europe. More and more can see that nation after nation is falling to fascism because there is no united defence. More and more are calling for that united defence. But how many yet see as clearly that the Power which is preventing united defence, and which is therefore making possible the victories of the Nazi sword, is Britain under the "National" Government. *As before* 1914, *so now, the decisive force which is opening the gates of the world to war is Britain.*

This is not less, but even more important to-day, despite the advance in the relative strength of fascism since then.

STALIN'S analysis of the international situation and of British policy, in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, is the clearest guide to the realities of the present situation, and requires to be studied again and again. He shows how the British policy of "non-intervention" is in reality a policy of fomenting war:

> Through the policy of non-intervention there runs the eagerness and desire not to prevent the aggressors from perpe-

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> trating their black deeds, not to prevent, say, Japan from becoming involved in a war with China—or still better, with the Soviet Union; to allow all belligerents to sink deep into the mire of war, stealthily to encourage them to follow this line, to allow them to weaken and exhaust one another, and then, when they become sufficiently weakened, to appear on the scene with fresh forces, to come out, of course "in the interests of peace," and to dictate their terms to weakened belligerent nations.

He shows further how this policy is in reality a "dangerous game" which recoils upon its authors:

> The big and dangerous political game which the adherents of the policy of non-intervention have started may end in a serious failure for themselves.

This analysis provides the clue to the apparent contradictions of British policy and to the present critical stage which has now been reached.

THE old traditional British policy of the balance of power, of holding the Powers divided to maintain British domination, has been translated to a new stage, linking up with the no less traditional counter-revolutionary policy of British reaction. Many critics have seen in Chamberlain's support to Nazi domination of the Continent of Europe a startling break with the century-old tradition of the balance of power. Did not Britain fight the war of 1914-18 to prevent such a German domination of Europe and shatter the dreams of Mitteleuropa? Millions of lives were sacrificed to attain this objective. Within twenty years all the fruits of these sacrifices have been deliberately thrown away, by the very statesmen who, like Neville Chamberlain, shared responsibility for Versailles, and who have now worked to assist the realisation of Mitteleuropa on a far more grandiose scale.

YET the contradiction is on the surface. For in the post-war world new forces have come to the front. The old alternation of France and Germany no longer dominates the centre of the scene, though in the first years it still appeared to do so. The new giant world Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, now stand in the forefront. Against these British imperialism now requires a powerful

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reactionary Germany as its partner in Europe. Union of Britain with the United States and the Soviet Union means the peace of the world. Chamberlain refuses such an all-powerful world democratic peace front. Instead, he pursues the old balance of power policy, and seeks to play off the Triple Pact of fascism against the United States and the Soviet Union. Therein lies the criminal war-responsibility of Chamberlain, masked in the guise of " non-intervention."

IT is in this situation that the increasingly active intervention of the United States, at present moral intervention, with every indication of growing readiness for a common front, in world affairs is of vital importance in the present relation of forces. This intervention is not merely the reflection of the democratic and humanitarian aspirations of Roosevelt, although here also the lines of division between the democratic and reactionary forces in the sphere of foreign policy correspond to the familiar lines in other countries to-day. But here the old Anglo-American imperialist antagonism, the deepest antagonism of world imperialism, comes to the assistance of the peace forces. The United States is perfectly well aware of Chamberlain's game, and of its potential threat, not only to the Soviet Union, but to the United States. And the United States is now exerting all its forces in a titanic campaign to torpedo Chamberlain's plan, and to prevent the alliance of Britain with Hitler-Germany. *With ever more insistent appeals and demonstrations, recalling the tactics of President Wilson, the United States is mobilising world opinion against Hitler and, by so doing, is exposing Chamberlain, making his path more difficult, forcing him to a show of parallel moves, and, most important of all, mobilising British opinion against Hitler.* The United States is in practice, beneath all the outwardly correct democratic forms, appealing to democratic opinion in Britain, in the best Wilsonian style, over the heads of its Government. This appeal is an opportunity which the democratic movement in Britain should seize with both hands.

AESOP tells a tale of a man who tried to bring up a lion cub. What happened when the lion grew up may be

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found in Aesop. For six years Britain has fostered its lion cub, Hitler, in the hope of having a fine hefty lion to let loose on the Soviet Union. The lion has now grown up, and the most critical moment of British policy is here. How to ensure that the lion will do its duty and not prefer the soft flesh of its keeper? Lion-taming is a risky profession; and lion-tamers must terrorise or go under. The appropriate means of pressure must be found to force the lion to do its job. Hence desperate rearmament; but that alone is not enough; the whip is not yet strong enough for the lion. Therefore it is entirely in keeping that at this moment British policy under Chamberlain should appear to make a sudden turn to the most violent and threatening speeches against Hitler, and should make the most positive demonstrations of a possible linking up with the Soviet Union, France and the United States against Hitler. This may go much further in the coming period: exchanges of missions and representations, cordial references in speeches, Chamberlain drinking the health of Litvinov—everything to make Germany furious, everything short of a clear binding alliance and engagement. All this is not yet a change of policy. *It is the whip for the lion.*

CHAMBERLAIN in effect says to Hitler: "If you are not prepared to do as we wish, do not imagine we are powerless and at your mercy. In the twinkling of an eye we can join up with the Soviet Union, France and the United States; at once Poland, Rumania, the small States, possibly even Italy will leap to the side of the stronger; and you are finished, broken, in your own expressive language, *kaput*. Alternatively, sign on the dotted line, and everything will be yours, supplies, finance, diplomatic and material assistance, an alliance, all that you wish. Choose." That is the whip for the lion; and that whip is by no means inconsistent with the basically unchanged, reactionary, anti-democratic, criminally war-mongering policy of Chamberlain, which is a menace to the peoples of the world.

THEREFORE, while we welcome every sign, however slight, of closer relations and understanding between Britain and the Soviet Union, while we must concentrate

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every effort now to develop and extend these into a real and positive outcome, while we must utilise to the utmost the awakening of British public opinion to the menace of Hitler and the collapse of Munich, let us be under no illusions as to the real rôle of Chamberlain. On the contrary, we need to fight all the harder for the removal of Chamberlain and his Government as the indispensable condition for the realisation of a new policy. *We need, not empty gestures, but a positive binding written treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union for the common maintenance of peace; and the experience of France has shown that, even when we have the written treaty, it is not enough, it is necessary to have a Government which will carry it out.* It is now more than ever essential, and in the altered state of public opinion after the obvious bankruptcy of Munich it is more than ever *possible* for the united democratic forces to defeat Chamberlain and to establish a Government which can alone carry out an alternative policy.

HOW is it explicable that Chamberlain remains in power after such a resounding collapse of his entire policy and public confession of bankruptcy ? Here the lesson of the by-elections affords a very interesting indication of what is happening in the present period. In the first five by-elections after Munich a Government majority turned into an anti-Government majority. Yet the Government vote did not yet slump; it slightly increased. In those five by-elections the Government vote moved from 123,000 at the previous general election to 124,000. The anti-Government vote moved from 99,000 to 131,000; and a representation of four to one for the Government turned into a representation of three to two against the Government. This was while the movement for the People's Front was sweeping forward; and two of the five by-elections were fought by Independent Progressives on a People's Front basis, without active measures of the Labour Party Executive yet to prevent it. This victorious advance was achieved while Munich was not yet exposed, while the Government was still able to hold and slightly increase the number of its supporters.

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CONTRAST the record of the four by-elections to date this year, East Norfolk, Holderness, Ripon and Batley, since the Labour Party expelled Cripps and launched its disastrous campaign of disruption in the Labour Party and internal feud of the progressive forces. During this period, as contrasted with the period immediately after Munich, the Government was heavily slumping in popular support, and the situation for the opposition was far more favourable. The Government vote fell from 94,000 to 75,000. But the anti-Government vote (four Labour candidates and one Liberal) only rose from 50,000 to 62,000, or less than the fall in the Government vote; the representation remained unchanged at three to one for the Government; and in the one Labour seat the Labour vote decreased. Such is the merciless verdict of the electorate on the policy of Transport House as opposed to the policy of the People's Front. The Government is losing support; but, because there is no visible united alternative, no united opposition to which to transfer support, these former supporters of the Government are passing out, instead of moving to the opposition, and the Government remains in power. *The hamstringing of the opposition by the Labour Party Executive is holding the Chamberlain Government in power.* This is the paradoxical political situation we have reached to-day.

AT the present day words are habitually used in the opposite sense of their meaning. It is therefore necessary for honest men to distinguish between labels and meanings. " Non-Intervention " is used to describe the most active intervention, arms blockade, denial of legal rights and even finally armed action against democracy. Fascism loves to describe itself as " Socialism." " Appeasement " is the recognised term for fomenting war and encouraging violent aggression. A positive peace policy is, on the other hand, described as " war-mongering." In keeping with this, Transport House has caught the technique and has affixed the label " Socialism " to its system of maintaining the Chamberlain Government in power.

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THE masses in the labour movement want socialism. The label is therefore excellently chosen for the purpose in view. If the real choice were presented between Chamberlain and the People's Front, there could be no question of the answer from every sane man and woman. But if this real choice, which is the actual choice of the present situation, can be concealed and disguised behind a wholly imaginary choice between "Socialism" and the People's Front, no more brilliant device could be conceived for keeping Chamberlain in power. No wonder the Government organ, the *Times*, is enthusiastic in its support of the Labour Party Executive, and, out of pure solicitude for the best interests of Labour, continuously warns against the menace of Cripps and the People's Front and urges stronger measures. When Hitler first came to power, and still trembled before the possible union of the masses which he knew could overthrow him, the one question which his agents asked on every side, and sought to extract an answer from every socialist and communist they arrested, was: "Is there any sign of a united front? Is there any likelihood of the Social Democratic Party Executive accepting the united front proposals of the Communist Party?" So long as the answer was "No," Hitler breathed again and knew he was safe. The same question is asked to-day from the Whips' offices of the "National" Government with regard to the People's Front. So long as the answer is "No," they know they are safe.

WHAT the abstruse difference is between the London Passenger Transport Board type of organisation which the Labour Party calls "socialism," and the "national planning and control" proposals of the democratic People's Front programme proposed by Cripps, may be left to the pundits to determine. In other circumstances the sudden discovery of a profound gulf of principle between them would be comic. But in practice it is an academic question, since the issue is one of labels, not realities. It is an invented issue to hide a genuine different division. Both the Labour Immediate Programme and the Cripps Programme are mainly striking by their similarity; they show how easily attainable is a

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common measure of agreement of what an immediate democratic majority could achieve. Neither are socialist programmes; but both admirably express the main lines for an immediate alternative Government to the Chamberlain Government, in order to reverse its policy, take the most urgent steps for safeguarding democracy and peace, and carry out progressive economic measures in the interests of the people. The important question is how to get the power to carry out the measures on which there is agreement. To spend time discovering pinprick differences between the measures proposed, with the result that nothing is carried out, but only Chamberlain's policy continues in practice, is only helpful to Chamberlain.

SOCIALISM is not a question of repeating incantations; it is a question of power, of class power. In order to reorganise society on a socialist basis the working class must win power. In order to win power the working class must know how to shift the existing relation of forces, that is, how to build up a majority combination of forces capable of ending the present dominance of reaction leading to fascism, and thus open the way to further advance. That is why the People's Front is at present advocated, not by the right wing, but most actively by the left wing in the working-class movement, by the most militant socialists, by those who most ardently desire the speediest realisation of socialism; and the adoption of the "socialist" label by the opponents of this advance, by those who are in practice closest to the Chamberlain Government, is an obvious travesty. The alternative does not lead to socialism; it leads to fascism.

THIS is what gives special urgency, not only to the issue of the People's Front, but to the new and grave issue that has now arisen of the disciplinary measures in the Labour Party, the expulsion of Cripps, the threats of expulsion to other leading members, and the apparent ban on discussion of an urgent political issue or advocacy of a minority standpoint Why was Cripps expelled ? Why have other leading members, including prominent Members of Parliament and the Acting President of the Miners, been threatened with expulsion ? Cripps may have taken steps which in point of procedure

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are open to criticism. It appears that he circulated his memorandum to the constituency labour parties who had placed him on the Executive without the prior sanction of the Executive. But surely that sanction ought to have been given. How else is a responsible member of the Executive, who feels that an issue of first class political importance, which has already wide support of a substantial minority in the party (perhaps even a direct referendum of the members would prove a majority), needs to be placed before the membership, to fulfil his duty ? Nothing could be more obvious than the sincere desire of Cripps to work within the machinery of the Labour Party, to raise an issue which he and many with him felt of burning importance, and to place it before the judgment of the membership. Surely there was no occasion for an irreparable breach in this.

WHY was Cripps expelled ? It is extraordinary how difficult it is to get a simple, straight intelligible answer to this question. The official answers show the most contradictory multiplicity, and went on changing their form and undergoing revision for weeks after the expulsion had taken place. They have finally reached their haven in a formula so rambling and complicated that the best-intentioned advocate of the Executive's standpoint can never remember it without referring to a piece of paper, and will usually prefer to take refuge in dark and sinister references to MacDonald and Mosley (who both of them joined up with big capital and fascism against Labour, whereas Cripps proposes that Labour should win allies to defeat big capital and fascism). The formula itself, if it is examined with any care, can only be described as plain nonsense.

HERE is the final formula as worked out for popular consumption day by day in the official Labour organ :

> " This is the kernel of the controversy over Sir Stafford Cripps' expulsion from the Labour Party.
>
> " He was asked to—
>
> Reaffirm his allegiance to the Labour Party within the meaning of constitution, programme, principles and policy of the Party, and withdraw his memorandum by circular to the persons and organisations to whom it was addressed.

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> " Had he consented to this, his proposals could have been raised and debated democratically at the annual conference of the Party. If they were carried at the Conference, they would become Party policy.
>
> " Sir Stafford refused. Therefore he was expelled."

This is the world of Alice in Wonderland. Cripps must first swear allegiance, not only to the constitution and basic programme of the Labour Party, as is perfectly reasonable, but also to the " principles and policy," which include opposition to the People's Front. Having sworn undying opposition to the People's Front, he is at liberty to bring forward proposals for supporting it. If he does so, it is obvious he will have broken his oath of allegiance. They have got him both ways. But what follows is even better and leaves the White Queen panting in the rear. Cripps must first withdraw his memorandum. Then it may be discussed. Conversely, if he presents it, it may not be discussed. How on earth the constituency labour parties and trade union membership are to reach an opinion on it, if they are not allowed to see it, is not explained. This liberty of discussion seems singularly like the liberty of the unemployed to reside at the Ritz Hotel.

" BRISTOL Labour Party," announces the *Daily Herald* proudly in a big front-page box, " rejected the Popular Front last night by 93 votes to 31." Immediately after, it adds : " The debate followed receipt of the National Executive's Memorandum warning local labour parties that it would exercise full powers of excluding any organisation or individual when fundamental differences were found to exist." A most " free " expression of opinion. Is it not an amazing demonstration of the will of the rank and file that under these circumstances the organisations putting resolutions on the issue on the Conference agenda should show a nine-to-one majority for the People's Front, and that hundreds of local parties should have dared publicly to declare their support under this régime of threats ? It is obvious that these extreme threats of disruption, if a majority reaches an opinion which is not approved, on the eve of a Conference that is supposed democratically to decide the issue, would not be employed if they were not thought necessary. If the Executive had any

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confidence that a free expression of opinion would result in a majority against the People's Front, they would not need to use their threats. The Executive's threats are therefore the clearest. expression of their view of the real will of the membership.

THERE is an extremely serious issue behind this amazing procedure, and one which must arouse the concern of every responsible member of the Labour Movement, whatever the views held on the question of the People's Front. At the present time we need greater unity, not splits; and this procedure pushes towards splits. But there is even more than this involved. We speak of the menace of fascism in Britain. We speak correctly of the obvious signs of the Chamberlain Government moving in this direction, and exposing the increasing governmental encroachment on popular liberties. Do we see the significance of what is happening in that essential pivot of the democratic system in this country, the functioning of parties—this increasing pressure of the machine in the two dominant parties (also in the Conservative Party against the Conservative dissidents) to root out every independent expression of opinion that hampers the domination of Chamberlain ? The real palladium of popular liberty in this country is the working class movement. If the freedom of the working-class movement is broken, democracy is broken. That is the experience of every country where fascism has been able to gain a hold. It is impossible not to feel that at this critical moment a measure of closure is being brought down on the free functioning of the working-class movement. Even those who operate it, actuated by temporary partisan emotions, may not realise fully what they are doing. But it is a matter for immediate and urgent alarm. For this is the way that the ground is prepared for fascism.

IT is therefore earnestly to be hoped that, even before the Whitsun Conference is reached, a way out will be sought and found by the most responsible representatives on both sides to heal the breach before it has gone further (there is no unbridgable difference to justify a breach), and to re-unite the ranks, while leaving reasonable facilities for discussion of issues that are felt urgent by any important section of opinion

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in the united movement. The supporters of the People's Front would never ask for more, would never wish other than to abide by the decision of the majority, while retaining the right to urge a change of policy which they feel essential for the interests and future of the movement. The minority asks for nothing save the constitutional right to turn itself into a majority. Let Cripps be reinstated; and let the issue of the People's Front be a permitted issue of discussion within the movement; so that the experience of the struggle and of events may enable the movement in time to reach democratically this urgently necessary decision. The situation is far too serious for any division of the Labour movement.

THE present turning-point of British policy and political development is a time of awakening for the people of this country before the overmastering realities of world events. It is a time of great opportunities and great dangers. Munich is exposed even in the eyes of those who supported it. The recognition of the necessity of a positive policy is now universal. The issue of the Peace Pact is becoming more and more an immediate political issue before the entire people. Never were the opportunities so favourable for winning the majority and driving through this decisive change of policy. Yet the danger is that the Chamberlain Government, owing to the weakness and division of the opposition, may still succeed to rebuild its authority, and carry forward its deception in new forms, using new phrases to meet the altered mood, but in reality continuing the old policy. In that case it will set itself to distort and exploit the popular awakening not to advance to a new policy of collective peace, but to carry through new measures for the subjection of the people and the destruction of popular liberties in the name of "defence" and the "national emergency." Those are the alternatives that now open out before the British people. It is for us to see that the response to the awakening shall defeat the dangers and lead the way to a new alignment in British politics and therefore to a new and hopeful situation for the world.

R. P. D.

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Appeasement and Armageddon

BY K. ZILLIACUS

THE GOVERNMENT ARE pouring out money like water on armaments, and at the same time singing the praises of appeasement. The Government say they are approaching bankruptcy in the greatest arms race in history, because they are so zealously pursuing peace. They will impose full industrial and military conscription, complete control of all news and views in press, radio and cinema, and govern by dictators from Whitehall the moment war breaks out, if not before—in order to defend democracy.

It is therefore interesting to consider what the Government mean by defence, and what is the relation between their home, imperial and foreign policies on the one hand and their defence responsibilities on the other.

" It should be emphasised," says the White Paper on Defence of March, 1936, " that in questions of defence our situation is different from that of most other great nations. Their forces can without risk be concentrated in limited areas near their own shores. Our world-wide responsibilities render this impossible."

It is a fact which is all too little realised that whereas " defence " to other countries means primarily home defence, that is the defence of their own territories from an invader, " defence " for this country means primarily imperial defence, that is the defence of British Dominions and colonies over one-quarter of the world, and of British investments and strategic interests over an even wider area.

We must always bear this unique position in mind when we think about the problem of defence. Japan and Italy, for instance, cannot directly menace this country, for geographical reasons. But they can attack parts of the British Empire. Germany can directly attack this country. But what Hitler wants is colonies and a sufficient degree of subservience from *Gauleiter* Chamberlain. If therefore we do go to war it will almost certainly be, not because of a direct attack on this country, but because of Fascist demands that the Government consider go too far in threatening Imperial interests.

Let us now consider the relation of the Government's foreign policy to the problem of defending this vast Empire. In the first place the impulse to expansion by British capitalism is pretty well spent. The main urge, as revealed in the crown colonies and partly in India, is to intensify the exploitation of the areas already subjugated and to

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combat the rising tide of colonial nationalism, which is intimately blended with growing social consciousness and militancy in colonial and semi-colonial peoples. In relation to the outside world, the main desire of the governing class of this country is to hang on to what they have acquired in the past.

As far back as the beginning of last century our rulers discovered that Great Britain was no longer strong enough to defend the Empire alone against any possible combination of enemies. The rise of Germany and Italy as great powers and the formation of the Triple Alliance forced them to become partners in the Triple Entente with France and Russia. In this way a Balance of Power was built up that made us able to hold our own when war came. But power politics did in the long run make the world war inevitable. And four years of world war bred a revolt against power politics that took shape in the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian revolutions and led to the weak compromise with Toryism and plutocracy embodied in the League of Nations.

The League was intended to replace power politics by welfare politics in international relations, to make it possible to preserve peace permanently, and to make it certain that if ever war came there would be an overwhelming preponderance of force behind those States that stood for the rule of law and against aggression. Without going into the question of how far this idea was worked out in the Covenant or was feasible without drastic social change, the fact remains that the League did embody the world's hope of peace, and did afford a means of preventing war altogether. It should therefore have been a matter of " honour and vital interests " for the Government of this country to uphold the Covenant against aggression. The National Government have instead destroyed the League by default, because they have always refused to regard upholding the Covenant against aggression as a national interest.* That has not been because the Government feared, on pacifist grounds, that sanctions might fail and involve us in war, but because they feared, on class-war grounds, that sanctions might succeed and involve the Fascist aggressor in revolution.

This policy has meant the disappearance of the League and the return to a state of lawless violence and aggravated power politics far worse than pre-war international anarchy. This means that war is sooner or later inevitable, as it always has been and always will be under power-politics. The Government are quite resigned to this fact. They regard war as sooner or later inevitable—as indeed it is unless there is a drastic change in their foreign policy.

But not only has the Government's foreign policy, by destroying

*The application of sanctions in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict was the kind of exception that proved the rule. For we now know that the whole operation was a deliberate swindle, intended to apply just enough sanctions to win the election but not so much as to defeat Mussolini.

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the League, made war sooner or later inevitable. It has at the same time, by destroying the Balance of Power, made certain that when war comes we cannot win. For the Fascist powers do not even believe in honour among thieves. And as that is the only kind of honour in which the National Government do believe, they feel morally indignant because their Fascist friends have let them down.

The Japanese have let them down. The Government thought that the social and imperial consequences of the revolution that would occur if Japan were defeated by collective action were a greater evil than the international consequences of letting Japanese aggression rip. But the Japanese did not stop in Manchuria or respect British interests, but are on the contrary waging a war to subjugate the whole of China and turn it into a monopoly market for Japanese imperialism.

The Government's policy has been to veer between half-hearted and futile " appeasement " and " resistance." " Appeasement " is Mr. Chamberlain's policy, pursued most of the time and summed up in his statement in the House on November 3 that the more the Japanese smashed up China the more money they would borrow from us afterwards. This sort of " appeasement " is half-hearted and futile, because the Japanese are not in China for the health of British imperialism and have no intention of sparing the British plums they may find in the Chinese cake they have bitten off. They will chew the lot, if they can manage it.

The " resistance " policy, to which the Government spasmodically resort (they are trying it again now) is half-hearted, because it consists in giving the Chinese just enough help, in the form of loans and munitions, to prevent their being conquered, but not enough to win, since victorious Chinese nationalism would have no more tenderness for " British interests " in China than victorious Japanese imperialism. The " resisters " want to prolong the war indefinitely in the hope that they can eventually " mediate " on the basis of exacting respect for " British interests " from both sides. This policy is futile, because this country can exert no appreciable influence alone on the Sino-Japanese struggle and cannot secure whole-hearted American and Soviet co-operation for a policy exclusively concerned with British vested interests in China, indifferent to the agony of the Chinese people, and hostile to their struggle for freedom. In the last analysis, the Government will come down on the side of Japanese Imperialism and share in its defeat. For Chinese nationalism and the social dynamism of the Chinese revolution, will in the long run defeat the invader, handicapped by China's vast size, the barbarity of the feudal-minded Japanese militarists, Japan's poverty and the intense social distress and disaffection in Japan.

Mussolini has let the Government down. They decided that the social and imperial consequences of defeating Italian Fascism and allowing the Abyssinians to win were a greater evil than letting Mussolini

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consummate his aggression. They hoped that if they offered Abyssinia to Mussolini on the instalment plan and lent him money, he would become a "satisfied power" and join us in a Stresa front against Germany. Instead Mussolini helped himself to the whole of Abyssinia, raised trouble all around the Mediterranean, and plunged into his war for imposing Fascism on Spain.

Mr. Chamberlain has tried appeasement by co-operating with Fascist aggression in Spain, by the Anglo-Italian agreement, and by indirectly assisting in the "pacification" of Abyssinia. He is now hoping to "mediate" between France and Italy—i.e., to do a Runciman over Tunis on his friend, M. Bonnet, who, however, is quite capable of returning the compliment by offering British colonies to Hitler.

Franco is letting down the National Government. They decided to help Mussolini and Hitler drown Spanish democracy in blood, under the somewhat inadequate disguise of "non-intervention," because the Spanish Government armed the workers and included Socialists and Communists after Fascist intervention began. Mr. Chamberlain thus, on class-war grounds, destroyed potential allies and brought into power avowed enemies of the British Empire at a point so vital as to make it virtually indefensible.

It was this circumstance which led to Mr. Eden's resignation, on the issue of the power-politics of the Foreign Office v. the class-war politics of the City. The Foreign Office agreed in desiring to butcher Spanish democracy. But it wished to combine this with regard for the defence of British Imperial interests by using the sacrifice of Spain to buy Mussolini out of the Rome-Berlin axis. Whereas Mr. Chamberlain was intent only on bringing Tory England into the Rome-Berlin axis as a junior partner, through a Four-Power Pact, and was prepared to pay any price in blood and filth for this noble end.

As a matter of fact the Government's policy has been even more tortuous and complicated than that in its attempts to resolve the contradiction between the interests at home and abroad of the plutocracy. There have been spasmodic attempts to induce Hitler to double-cross Mussolini and prolonged attempts to believe that Mussolini was yielding to our blandishments and about to double-cross Hitler. And now the Government are consoling themselves with the thought that by unconditionally recognising Franco and helping him in Minorca and Madrid to slake his thirst for revenge on those who have defended democracy and their country's freedom, they will be able to lend him money and bribe him into double-crossing both Hitler and Mussolini. All in vain—Franco too will let them down.

The greatest disappointment has been Hitler. The National Government knew all about the Nazis' illegal rearmament from the moment they came in, as Lord (then honest Mr.) Baldwin confessed in his "appalling frankness" speech in the House on November 12, 1936. They defeated all proposals by other nations for collective action to

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stop the illegal rearming and to put an end to Nazi interference in Austria. They helped the Nazi régime to consolidate itself and allowed quantities of aeroplane engines to be exported (on Government licences) to Nazi Germany, although it was pointed out again and again in the House that this meant helping the Nazis to build up their treaty-breaking air force. In 1935 they joined with Hitler in violating the naval disarmament provisions of the Peace Treaty. They did all this because to have taken steps against illegal Nazi rearmament and Nazi interference in Austria at any time between 1933 and 1936 would have ended in the German people overthrowing the Nazi régime by revolution. And rather than risk that, the Government preferred helping the Nazis to rearm and to terrorise Europe. They hoped that in return Hitler would carry out the policy announced in *Mein Kampf* and concentrate on subjugating Eastern Europe and fighting the U.S.S.R.

The cold-blooded murder of Czechoslovakia was the latest of many attempts to encourage Hitler to commit aggression Eastwards. The Government's studied indifference, masking their satisfaction, at the final partition and occupation of what was the Czechoslovak Republic, shows that they still cling to the hope that Hitler will go East. Mr. Chamberlain's " bitter disappointment " in the House of Commons was just a sinister comedy. The wiping-out of Czechoslovakia was from the beginning part and parcel of his policy of appeasement. Pretending to be an idiot in order to conceal the fact that he is a crook is just part of the Prime Minister's technique.

But in the Baltic States, Poland, Roumania and Yugoslavia, and to a lesser degree in Hungary, there are semi-Fascist (in some cases almost wholly Fascist) régimes which, like Dollfuss and Schuschnigg in Austria, hate democracy and the working class, but wish to retain the monopoly of exploiting their own peoples for their own plutocrats and land-owners, and resent the desire of the Nazis to " muscle-in on their racket." Behind these régimes are democratic and Socialist parties, representing most of the workers and peasants and a good many of the professional and lower middle classes, more or less loosely united in a formal or informal Popular Front, working sometimes underground, sometimes legally, sometimes in the hazardous twilight of semi-legality. They do not like their own semi-Fascist régimes. But they like the Nazis and (in the case of Yugoslavia) the Italians, even less, and prize their national independence. Therefore in the last analysis they will back their Governments in resisting foreign Fascist encroachments. They know that in doing so they would have, if it came to war, the support of the Soviet Union, and that such a war would inevitably be fatal not only to the external Fascist aggressor, but also to pluto-Fascism in their own countries.

This is the background to the fall of the pro-Nazis, Imredy in Hungary and Stoyadinovich in Yugoslavia, of the revival of the Polish-

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Roumanian alliance, the plans for a Baltic-Black Sea canal and of the desire shown by the Polish and Roumanian Governments for friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Polish-Hungarian plans for the partition of Carpatho-Ruthenia in order to establish a common frontier are likely to be frustrated by the Nazi desire to use this territory, rebaptised " Carpatho-Ukraine " as a jumping-off place for stirring up trouble in the Polish Ukraine (East Galicia), where there are plenty of grievances and a Fascist-Nationalist movement, and for intrigues against the Soviet Ukraine. If the Hungarians are allowed to occupy this territory it will only be because the Nazis believe they can control all Hungary.

But with this and the final subjugation of the Czechs and Slovaks, Hitler may well rest content for the moment. For if Hitler were to begin a real drive Eastward he would ultimately, and probably soon, encounter resistance from Poland and Roumania, with behind them the armed might of the Soviet Union. Hitler knows that Stalin was not boasting but speaking the sober truth when he told the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. that the Soviet Union had become enormously powerful and that " We stand for the rendering of support to nations which have fallen prey to aggression and are fighting for the independence of their countries."

This is the basic fact that is causing Hitler to turn Westward. In Central Europe he wishes to push economic and political penetration so far as is possible without war, in order to establish German hegemony so solidly as to be able to draw on the economic resources of these countries and to rely on their friendly neutrality in case of war in the West. This means a *Drang Nach Osten* in South-east Europe (the Balkans) that will tread on the commercial corns of British plutocracy without giving any political comfort to the National Government. The attempts of leaders of the F.B.I. and the City to come to terms with their opposite numbers in Berlin show how our plutocracy are likely to react to that situation. The wishful thinking—not to say wilful mendacity—of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Samuel Hoare about deals with Hitler and Mussolini leading to fresh triumphs for " appeasement " show that the National Government are still clinging to the belief that they can buy Hitler off and induce him to commit aggression against others, preferably the U.S.S.R. But, as Sir Thomas Inskip was recently overheard to say during a visit at Cambridge, " Some of us in the Cabinet are beginning to feel that that fellow Hitler has let us down."

The Soviet Union, too, in its own way, has disappointed our National Government. In the first place, it has insisted on making a success of its five-year plans, and that at the very time when the capitalist world staggered out of an unparalleled slump into the greatest and deadliest arms race in history and is now lurching toward bankruptcy and another slump—unless it is first overtaken by Fascism and world war.

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In the second place, the U.S.S.R. has made itself a military power so great that the Fascist régimes fear to attack it and are finding the Western pluto-democracies easier meat. This is most vexatious.

Thirdly, the Soviet Union would insist upon taking part in the Disarmament Conference, where it showed up the capitalist great powers, and not least our National Government, and would enter the League of Nations, where it did its best to get the Covenant applied on behalf of victims of aggression. This was at times positively embarrassing to our National Government, who were trying to be mistaken for gentlemen in public while privately doing deals with the aggressor.

The substantial help given by the U.S.S.R. to the Spanish Republic almost caused the job of butchering Spanish democracy to fail, and forced our butchers to show their non-intervening hands. The promise to stand by Czechoslovakia even if France and Great Britain betrayed that country almost brought about the failure of Mr. Chamberlain's policy of inducing Czechoslovak democracy to let itself be murdered quietly. The Soviet assistance on a large scale being given to China's struggle for independence is fatally handicapping our Government's efforts to induce the Chinese to capitulate or alternatively to assent to being the victims of a dirty deal, in the name of "mediation," between British and Japanese Imperialism.

On top of all this, the Soviet Union will persist in seeing through our National Government. In order to justify their policy of handing over Czechoslovakia to Hitler in September, the Government started a whispering campaign of slander about the alleged military weakness and political unreliability of the Soviet Union. Foreign Commissar Litvinov and Ambassador Maisky promptly started a counter-offensive, in Geneva and London, that exposed the bad faith of the British and French Governments. It ended with Lord Winterton, who had incautiously repeated Government propaganda aloud, being compelled to apologise to Ambassador Maisky and to plead that he had been "misinformed" (which was a euphemism for confessing that he had been caught out perpetrating one-syllabled terminological inexactitudes).

Stalin, in his speech to the 18th U.S.S.R. Communist Congress, was positively rude about "appeasement." He said it was a policy of encouraging and discreetly assisting the Fascist powers to commit aggression, on class-war grounds. And, as the French say, *il n'y a que la vérité qui blesse* (nothing hurts like the truth).

Worse than that, it looks as though Mr. Chamberlain's visit to the Soviet Embassy and Mr. Hudson's journey to Moscow were going to fail of their main political object. The Government wanted an additional card in their diplomatic hand for the forthcoming power-political poker game with Hitler about colonies. They wanted to be able to say to Hitler "You don't like us getting on so well with the U.S.S.R., do you? Well, we don't like you pushing us too hard about colonies. So you lay off colonies and turn East again, and we will

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drop the U.S.S.R. and wish you good luck."

And now Stalin has spoiled the game by saying bluntly and brutally that those who threw Czechoslovakia to the Fascist wolves did so because they hoped thereby to induce them to attack the U.S.S.R., that instead Hitler has turned West, that the Soviet Union "stands for peace and for the strengthening of business-like relations with all countries," but that it will not allow itself "to be involved in conflicts by instigators of war, who are used to get other people to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."

If the Government are capable of seeing themselves as others see them, they will realise that this means that the Soviet Union will not quixotically rush to their assistance if they get involved in a war against hopeless odds with the Fascist *bloc* owing to a sordid squabble about colonial swag. For if the U.S.S.R. were to do so, our National Government would immediately and joyfully double-cross them by concluding a separate peace with the Fascist powers, even on onerous and humiliating terms, leaving them at war with the Soviet Union. To win a war against the Fascist powers with the help of the Soviet Union would mean losing the class-war at home and in the Empire. British plutocracy would rather see democracy and civilisation die a thousand deaths at the hands of Fascism than endure that calamity.

It is because, as Stalin's speech showed, the Soviet Government are perfectly aware of this that we need expect no assistance from the Soviet Union so long as we have not put the Fifth Column of World Fascism out of office and out of business in this country. On the other hand, Soviet co-operation would be available for the asking the moment a Government came into power in this country that represented the needs and purposes of the common people. For, said Stalin, the Soviet Government rely on "the moral support of the working people of all countries to whom the preservation of peace is of vital concern," and desire the strengthening of the bonds of international friendship uniting the people of the Soviet Union with the working people of all countries.

The United States of Roosevelt and the New Deal is also looked at askance by our National Government. For in home policy the Roosevelt Administration and the progressive, democratic America it represents has fought the plutocracy and done things for the common people and in particular the working class that make it in the eyes of Mr. Chamberlain and those he represents only a few degrees less obnoxious than the Bolsheviks. In foreign policy American democracy, including leading members of the Administration, have expressed themselves with generous strength about Mr. Chamberlain's Fascist friends and about the policy of conniving at aggression under the style of "appeasement." They have in fact made no bones about their detestation of Fascism and of their belief that the Chamberlain Government is pro-Fascist and anti-democratic to the core.

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American democracy is rapidly coming to the conclusion that the U.S.A. must play her part in the world-wide struggle of democracy against Fascism. A Government representing the common people of this country would soon secure the full co-operation of the U.S.A. This would begin in the Far East, where American capitalism, for historic reasons, has a trading rather than an investment interest in China and so agrees with American democracy in desiring China's victory in her struggle for independence. But the attitude of American progressives towards supporting the Chamberlain Government in war is well expressed in the following extracts from a recent article in the Radical weekly, *The New Republic*, entitled " Is England Worth Fighting For ? " :

> Of course, we have one interest in common—the much-advertised community of ideals, democracy, and civic and spiritual liberties, and so on; a faith that many people feel is worth fighting for. The Czechs shared that faith, too, and last September Mr. Neville Chamberlain decided it was not worth fighting for. If the English fight and we fight for them, the war will be in defence of English interests and not of any common ideals; Mr. Chamberlain has ruled that argument out. . . .
>
> I believe that the English are the most civilised of all the larger nations. . . . Those people, that spirit, are worth saving at considerable cost; but unfortunately they have little influence on present British policy, and the one thing that American aid to Britain would be most likely to save is the prestige of the Chamberlain Government.
>
> It makes me sick at the stomach to think of what my English friends may presently have to undergo; but it makes me sick at the stomach to think of what my Czech friends are undergoing now, thanks to a British Ministry that might be more firmly settled in control of England if we helped England to win a war.

The Government's belief that the U.S.A. will rush to their assistance when appeasement ends in Armageddon is just as fatuous as their delusion that they will be able to get out of their difficulties in case of war by securing the help of the Soviet Union and then double-crossing that country.

Another result of the Government's policy has been to make the Empire the sick man of the world, much as the Austro-Hungarian Empire was before the last world war.

Collective security was a big enough idea to win the adherence of democratic opinion in the Dominions and to reconcile co-operation in foreign policy and defence with the desire for independence. By destroying the League and substituting Imperialism as the basis for its defence policy, the Government are driving the Dominions toward policies of national isolation and even neutrality. By destroying the Balance of Power the Government have made it physically impossible for this country to go to the assistance of e.g., Australia or New Zealand in case either were attacked, or for them to come to our assistance if we were attacked, and has reinforced their moral reluctance to " fight for Britain's black Empire " by adding insuperable military obstacles.

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Revolutionary nationalism in India has been incalculably strengthened by disgust at the Government's foreign policy. The Indian National Congress is pledged to all-in war resistance in case any attempt is made to drag India into a war without allowing the Indian people to determine their own foreign and defence policies. But it is ready to bring a free India into partnership with other free nations in a peace *bloc* or World Peace Union based on collective security.

In the crown colonies there is bitter and growing discontent, owing to increasingly harsh exploitation by great trusts and combines. Nothing is more probable in case of an international conflict than a combination of race-war and class-war in colonial possessions—not at once but after the war had dragged on for a couple of years.

In home policy the Government are approaching bankruptcy in the arms race which their foreign policy is rendering futile, for " appeasement " disarms us more in a fortnight than rearmament can make us strong for defence in two years. Unemployment is again around the 2,000,000 mark, another slump is inexorably drawing near, and neither the Government nor the plutocracy they serve have the money —for it is going to war profiteers—nor feel in the mood to make concessions when the slump does break upon us. On the contrary, they are already talking in terms of slashing the social services, wage cuts, compulsory training for the unemployed, etc.

So long as this Government continues to mis-rule England, the future holds only three possibilities :

The first is that Mr. Chamberlain meant what he said when he declared in the House on March 24 of last year that although the Government were too pacifist to take part with Russia and France in a collective guarantee to Czechoslovakia or in restoring the Spanish Government's right to buy arms, they were determined, if necessary, single-handed, to fight for all British colonial possessions everywhere and also for Iraq, Egypt and Portugal. The recent exchange of pledges with Daladier and Bonnet has re-emphasised and extended this statement, and turned it into a joint declaration to the effect that while the two Governments representing British and French plutocracy will not lift a finger to defend democracy against Fascism or to honour treaty obligations they will reduce their respective countries to a shambles and a smoking ruin in fighting against any odds for their own and each others Imperial interests.

On this hypothesis the section of the plutocracy that want to defend their Imperialist interests abroad against Fascist aggression would get the upper hand over the now dominant section, which believes that Toryism and plutocracy can continue to run this country only so long as Fascism is suffered to rule the world.

The second possibility is that " appeasement " will grow with what it feeds upon. The more the Government weaken and isolate and demoralise this country and aggrandise and enflame the Fascist *bloc*

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by " appeasement," the more dangerous it will become, on both social and international grounds, to cease " appeasing." On this view there would be no logical end to " appeasement " short of *Gauleiter* Chamberlain making his submission to Hitler in terms similar to those just employed by what was Czechoslovakia. " The British Premier declares that in order to serve the purpose of securing final appeasement he will place the destiny of the British people and the country with confidence in the hands of the German Reich " (I have merely substituted " British " for " Czech," " Premier " for " President," and " appeasement " for " pacification " in the original declaration).

On this view the section of the plutocracy represented by Mr. Chamberlain, which thinks the Empire as well as civilisation well lost if they can hang on to their class-rule at home, even as vassals of Hitler, will continue to be in control of the Government to the bitter end, which will be loss of both democracy and national independence.

The third possibility is that the Government will go on trying to have it both ways. At home they will continue to try to keep democracy safe for plutocracy, and abroad they will continue their frantic efforts to make international Fascism safe for British Imperialism. On that view the class-war pacifists and the power-political Imperialists will be pulling different ways in each crisis, but without either triumphing finally, thus introducing elements of inconsistency, ambiguity and " muddle " into the Government's policy. At last, in some crisis of a power-political bargain about colonies, vested interests will mobilise sufficient resistance to prevent Mr. Chamberlain selling out in time. He will over-reach his hand by trying to double-cross everybody all round while shamming ignorance and stupidity (some of it perhaps unfeigned), and appeasement will end in Armageddon by accident.

I regard the first of these three possibilities as the least, the last as the most likely. Either the first or the last would mean a war in which we should be pitted against a Fascist *bloc* appeased into formidable strength, without allies or unity in the British Commonwealth, with revolutionary resistance in India and revolutionary unrest in the colonies. In such a war we should be fighting, not for any principle, but like bloated rats in a corner, for the Imperial swag. In such a war there would be no victors, as Mr. Chamberlain has said. Such a war, in Captain Liddell Hart's words, would be " a greater muddle than the last. It would begin in confusion and end in chaos." Such a war would verify Lord Baldwin's prediction at Bewdley in April, 1936, that " the next war will be the end of civilisation in Europe . . . . The raging peoples of every country, torn with passion, suffering and horror, would wipe out every Government in Europe and you would have a state of anarchy from end to end of it as man's protest against wickedness in high places."

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But whichever of these possibilities is the true one, whether Mr. Chamberlain intends to fight for Imperialism against suicidal odds, or merely says he does in order to justify imposing Fascism at home, or proposes to gamble with the blood and lives of millions of British men, women and children in a power-political poker game with his Fascist patrons (on October 3 last Mr. Chamberlain boasted that he was a " realist " who was rearming, not only for defence but in order to " make our diplomacy more effective ")—on any one of these hypotheses one thing is certain : the Government propose to use the world crisis, which their foreign policy is continually making worse and more dangerous, to move as fast as they dare to industrial and military conscription.

Our rulers do not believe they can win the only kind of international war in which they are willing to fight—i.e., an Imperialist war. But they do not intend to lose the class-war in any circumstances. Whether or not they intend to fight the Fascist powers for colonies in the next crisis or at some future date, they are resolved to fight the workers in the next slump. They are therefore proceeding on exactly the lines against which Mr. Attlee warned the Labour Party when he told the Edinburgh Conference in 1936 that if we were to accept all the demands made by the Government in the name of defence, regardless of their foreign policy, we should end up by embracing Fascism at home on the plea of preparing to fight it abroad.

Unfortunately, in predicting that Labour would never be a party to that, Mr. Attlee seems to be in danger of suffering the proverbial fate of a prophet in his own country. On this issue Labour's Right-wing leadership is repeating with a really horrifying exactness the tragi-comic experience of the German Social Democrats.

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Labour and the Cripps Campaign

BY ALLEN HUTT

A SPECTRE HAUNTS Transport House—the spectre of working-class unity and the People's Front. Like the venerable professors who have been slaying Marxism regularly since its inception the dominant leaders of the Labour Party persistently exorcise the spectre; but, sad to relate, their experience is the same as that of the academic wiseacres. It is certainly the case that in the tremendous crisis of our times a realisation is abroad even in most orthodox quarters that what might have been appropriate in the dear dead days—a peaceful parliamentary evolution culminating some time in the far, far distant future in a Labour government—has no immediate meaning, except as a piece of escapism, when the world is crashing to destruction. Did not the leader of the Labour Party, Mr. C. R. Attlee, himself say of the Popular Front less than two years ago : " I would not myself rule out such a thing as an impossibility in the event of the imminence of a world crisis. It might on a particular occasion be the lesser of two evils ? " Many find it difficult to appreciate why Mr. Attlee has not since been persuaded that a world crisis has ceased to be merely " imminent," it is in full blast.

Shortly after those words of Mr. Attlee's appeared in print (in his Left Book Club choice) the question of the united front was raised at the Bournemouth Conference of the Labour Party, in October, 1937, by Sir Stafford Cripps. Though the big battalions of the unions won the day for the executive and defeated Sir Stafford's unity plea by 1,730,000 votes to 373,000 it will be remembered that he was one of the outstanding new figures elected to the Executive at that conference following the constitutional reform which gave direct representation to constituency parties. This tangible evidence of rank and file confidence in the principal protagonist of unity is significant when set against Sir Stafford's specific statement in the debate that :

> I trust this conference will not take any hand in limiting Labour Party members to such a strict and crushing orthodoxy. It is by public discussion that change can be accomplished, and the party that cannot take the risk of the effect of public propaganda upon its followers must become apathetic. If public discussion of new ideas is to be prohibited to Party members, then the Labour Party is going to become a lifeless and mechanical automaton, repeating only the things it is allowed to repeat, and not endowed with that fire of conviction and enthusiasm which is essential if we are ever to win victory and power.

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At the Bournemouth Conference it was decided to change the date of Labour Party conferences from October to Whitsun, and it was subsequently decided that the next conference should not take place until Whitsun, 1939. Nevertheless, it was understood that the conference would be called at an earlier date if circumstances warranted. The point is vital because the adherence of the executive to the 1939 date, despite the overwhelming happenings of 1938, had a direct bearing upon developments within the party. The shock of the Hitler rape of Austria in March of last year unleashed a wide and deep drive for united action, reaching its highest point in the *Reynolds News* and Co-operative Party Peace Alliance campaign. While Transport House stood pat, the issue during the year of no fewer than four successive statements testified to the uneasiness of the Party high command. In April a statement to all affiliated organisations affirmed that there could be no association " in any way whatever " with either United Front or People's Front movements. Next month a fuller statement, entitled " Labour and the Popular Front," took as its theme what has since become the principal argument—" Do not let us compromise our socialist convictions." After Munich a manifesto was issued, first headed " a Supreme National Effort for Peace," but later entitled " Labour's Claim to Government "—perhaps because the text did not give any party label to the alternative government which is rightly declared to be necessary, urging simply the need for " a new and firm government . . . . which can inspire and lead this democratic people." Finally, at the end of November last, after it had been rumoured that even certain highly orthodox leaders were canvassing ideas for some form of National Opposition to the Old Man of Munich, the Executive " after a survey of the political situation arising from recent developments at Munich and elsewhere, reaffirmed its attitude towards combinations with other political parties." The line of what was curiously called the " recently published " statement of the previous May was specifically reasserted.

With this background both of external events and internal party developments, it was inevitable that controversy should take a more clear-cut form. The fact that thirty-nine Labour M.P.s collectively supported Independent Vernon Bartlett, the sensational victor of Bridgwater, and received only a mild reproof from the Party authorities, suggested significant possibilities. It was noted that Mr. Dalton himself led the cheers for Mr. Bartlett when he, in turn, spoke for the Labour candidate in the ensuing Lewisham by-election.

At the beginning of January of this year Sir Stafford Cripps submitted to his colleagues of the party executive a considered memorandum* analysing the political situation, stressing its " extreme urgency and desperately critical nature," claiming that without progressive unity led by the Labour Party the Chamberlain Government could

*Printed textually in the LABOUR MONTHLY, February, 1939, pp. 116-121,

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not be defeated, and outlining a 12-point programme on the main issues of home and foreign policy. This memorandum was rejected on the Executive by 17 votes to 3. Sir Stafford thereupon sought to plead his case at the tribunal of rank-and-file opinion by circulating a memorandum throughout the Party. Within a few days he was able to announce that the " mass of letters " he had received from all over the country suggested that his views were " very widely held by persons in all sorts of positions in the Party, in the Co-operative Movement and in the trade unions." The immediate reply of the national executive made on January 14 by its chairman, Mr. George Dallas, was to request all Party organisations and members to " suspend judgment " until they had heard the Executive's case, declaring meantime that the Executive " refused to water down its immediate programme for electoral purposes."

The last remark was in truth cryptic since there was no essential difference between Sir Stafford's programme and the immediate programme of the Labour Party in any real Socialist sense; doubters may be referred to a paragraph by paragraph comparison in the *Tribune*, March 10, 1939.

Sir Stafford dealt with the " pure Socialism " argument in a speech at Dundee when he said " if the National Government obtains another five years of office, then in my view Socialism is out of the question for at least a generation," adding that " there is no doubt at all in my mind that the people of this country have a very urgent and immediate task before them—that is, the salvation of their own democracy and freedom which is, as far as I am concerned, the same thing as saying that they are primarily interested in the immediate defeat of the National Government." Sir Stafford pointedly continued :

> I have had a good deal of experience personally in the past in attempting to get a real Socialist policy adopted in the programme of the Labour Party, and I have found that many of those who are now loudest in their advocacy of a policy of pure Socialism—for instance, the *Daily Herald*—are the very ones who were most furious in their opposition to my proposals on the ground that they would needlessly alarm the electorate. . . . . Had we in the past done more to convince our own followers and the electors at large of the need for an undiluted policy of Socialism, we might now in this emergency be in a better position to win an electoral triumph on that basis. (*Manchester Guardian*, January 23, 1939).

Matters quickly moved to a climax, after a brief delay caused by the unavoidable absence of Sir Stafford from the Executive meeting of January 18, that body meantime deciding to remit the affair to its organising sub-committee for report. The battle was joined at the Executive on January 25 after a private preliminary barrage from Messrs. Bevin and Marchbank, who were reported to have threatened withdrawal of their unions from the Labour Party if the Cripps' proposals were accepted, and a chatter of machine-gun fire from the London Labour agents, who hastened to " assure " Secretary Middleton

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that Sir Stafford's views "find no appreciable support among the rank-and-file."* Mr. Marchbank wrote in the *Railway Review* that the Cripps' policy was "either treachery or sheer imbecility" and averred that "we must preserve our political organisation from the creeping paralysis that would result from its inoculation with the Cripps' germ of defeatism."

The sub-committee's report was in effect an indictment. Sir Stafford's crimes were cited—"wide departure from the Party's programme," "present organised effort to change Party direction and leadership," "aid and comfort to its opponents"—and he was requested to "reaffirm his allegiance to the Labour Party within the meaning of the constitution, programme, principles and policy of the Party," to withdraw his memorandum by circular, failing all which he would be expelled. Supported only by Ellen Wilkinson, Sir Stafford refused to accept these extraordinary conditions for his muzzling and was therefore duly cast out. The historic comment, to me, was the two newspaper bills I saw in juxtaposition that evening:

LABOUR	MOORS IN
EXPELS	BARCELONA
CRIPPS	SUBURBS

Sir Stafford himself immediately made a statement, whose terms are worth noting:

> I trust that all my many friends in the Labour Party, trade unions and co-operative movement will redouble their efforts to strengthen these movements and to convince them of the urgent necessity for combining all the anti-Fascist forces in this country *so that we may get a Government which will protect effectively our democracy and freedom. . . . The time is ripe in this country for a great forward movement towards democracy and peace, a movement in which the Labour Party should be the largest and most important factor. It is because I am determined to go forward with the advocacy of this, I believe the sole means of saving our civilisation, that my membership of the Labour Party has been terminated by the Executive.* Above all things we must avoid any split in the Party. This we can do by concentrating our energies upon the strengthening by every means in our power of the opposition to the National Government.†

That same evening, at the jammed-to-overflowing Spain rally of the Left Book Club in the Queen's Hall the man for whose views the rank-and-file showed "no appreciable support," had one of the biggest ovations that I can recollect in twenty years of public meetings.

Does it seem odd at this point to ask "Why was Cripps expelled?" It is a lot less odd than might appear. Many individuals and organisations in the Labour Party, specifically including those who did not agree with Sir Stafford's proposals, asked that question with

*After the expulsion it was announced that 17 Divisional Parties in London were sending a deputation to the Executive to demand Sir Stafford's reinstatement. (*News Chronicle*, February 22.)

†I quote the statement from *The Times* of January 26. The *Daily Herald* of that date only saw fit to publish a truncated two-paragraph version, notably omitting the italicised portions.

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growing indignation; for it could not be forgotten that in its statement of January, 1937, condemning the Unity Campaign of that time, the Executive had said: "the Labour Party has never exercised an iron discipline nor does it demand unthinking loyalty. It encourages free discussion . . . . It seeks a loyalty to its general principles, based on understanding and democratic consent." It could hardly be said that "free discussion" of the Cripps memorandum had been "encouraged" when refusal to withdraw the memorandum had been one of the grounds for expelling Sir Stafford. Nor was it easy to regard the ultimatum to "reaffirm allegiance" to the Constitution, Programme, Principles and Policy of the Party as other than a demand for something much more like "unthinking loyalty" than "democratic consent." It would be difficult to claim that, on the basis of his published programme, Sir Stafford was not loyal to Labour's "general principles."

On the night of the expulsion the General Council of the Bristol East Divisional Party, going on record in support of their member, desired to know how constitutionally "a member is prevented from circularising his views within the movement" (a key point omitted from the report of this protest in the *Daily Herald* of January 26). To that there has been no answer. The Executive asserted that they had acted under Clause VIII., paragraph 2 (*b*) of the Party Constitution, which confers on them disciplinary powers, including "expulsion of an individual," to "enforce the Constitution, Standing Orders and Rules." Was it suggested that Sir Stafford, by bringing forward *for discussion* new proposals of a programmatic character, was contravening Clause III., paragraph 3 (*a*) of the Constitution, which includes as a condition of membership acceptance of the Party Programme? Reference might, on the other hand, be made to Clause V., paragraph 1, which prescribes that "specific proposals" for inclusion in the Party Programme shall be decided on by the Party Conference; and in view of the refusal, noted above, to advance the date of the Conference despite the emergency situation, what was a conscientious member of the Executive to do but seek to place his proposals before his Party constituents for immediate consideration?

Final confusion was introduced by a boxed italic statement which the *Daily Herald* carried over a number of days, purporting to give the "kernel" of the "controversy over Sir Stafford Cripps' expulsion." This reads as follows:

> He was asked to abide by the constitution and policy of the Labour Party and withdraw his memorandum. He refused, although he could then have brought his proposals before the Annual Conference at Whitsun and agreed to abide by the democratic decision of the Party. Therefore, since he would not accept the Party constitution he was expelled.

A comparison of this with the Executive's original "indictment" is instructive; and Sir Stafford had to point out to the *Daily Herald*,

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what everybody knew, that he " never refused to accept the Party constitution, though I did refuse to make an empty reaffirmation of the Party's creed, etc.," adding that the indication that he " refused to abide by the decision of the Party Conference " was " completely false and can only be stated by you for the express purpose of misleading the membership of the Labour Party." " The question of my abiding by the decision of that Conference was never raised in the Executive," he went on " nor was I ever asked whether I would abide by that decision. Of course, had I remained a member of the Party I should have abided by the decision, as must every member."

It was noteworthy that the movement of protest against the Executive's action was from the beginning much wider than a movement in support of the specific Popular Front proposals. By the middle of March 242 Labour Parties had gone on record in favour of the Cripps memorandum, 79 of them being divisional parties; but there were a further 87 parties, 27 of them divisional, which had simply protested against the expulsion. Of the latter there were some, like the Stockport Trades Council and Labour Party, which protested against the expulsion without, as they put it, necessarily supporting the Popular Front. There were others, like the Northampton Labour Party's General Council, which actually rejected the Popular Front by 36 votes to 13, but nevertheless protested against the expulsion by 49 votes to six. Of 120 chairmen and secretaries of local parties who were asked by a number of their colleagues in London to associate themselves with a letter of protest against the expulsion, 68 replied in the affirmative, over 40 of them being officers of divisional parties throughout the country. It is not believed that Chairman George Dallas had this in mind when he spoke to the *Daily Herald* (February 1) of the " evidence in all parts of the country that Sir Stafford Cripps' project for linking the Labour Party with the Liberal Party (!!) is arousing indignation and resentment among the more active workers."

Protests came from bodies like the Labour Party League of Youth (in a statement signed by twelve members of their National Advisory Committee, headed by Chairman Ted Willis, an action which may be held to account for the shortly following suspension of the Committee and the League Conference by the Party Executive), students and staff of Ruskin College (" far from strengthening the Party you have done a good deal towards destroying the workers' faith in the Labour Party "), and from a group of Labour M.P.s and candidates. These last described the expulsion as " both irresponsible and unrepresentative." " We regard it as in keeping with the failure of the Executive to mobilise effectively the opposition to the National Government which exists in the country . . . . there is grave danger that this failure, if continued, will reduce the Labour Party to political impotence." The M.P.s signing this document were Aneurin Bevan, S. O. Davies, John Parker, Cecil Poole, Philips Price, G. R. Strauss and Ben Riley;

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the candidates included G. D. H. Cole, R. H. S. Crossman, Commander Edgar Young, Dorothy Woodman and R. Bridgeman.

Meantime Sir Stafford had notified the Executive of his desire, if it were constitutional, to appeal to the Party Conference and had been informed that there was no precedent for this but that his application would go to the Conference Arrangements Committee. There were signs of a division of union opinion along not unfamiliar lines. The Executive of the Transport and General Workers' Union recorded its support of the expulsion while the Executive of the Mineworkers' Federation urged that Sir Stafford should be heard at Conference, the Federation delegates then deciding how their votes should be cast. Protest resolutions from some hundred union branches and 46 trade councils had been recorded by the middle of March.

The first detailed statement issued by the Party Executive after the expulsion was circulated on February 2, entitled "Unity—real or sham?" It was a repetition at great length of the well-known arguments. Admitting that the situation "has indeed become very much more grave" since the statement of May, 1938—Munich and Spain were cited—it went on, "but nothing which has occurred has weakened the force of the argument of the National Executive against the Popular Front," represented as "a mere reversion to Liberalism." It was claimed that Sir Stafford's programme "differs materially" from the Party's immediate programme on the formal ground that it referred to "national control" instead of public ownership. The Executive refused to accept Sir Stafford's fixing of a Government majority of 3,000 as the deadline above which a Labour candidate could hardly hope to win and proposed to double this, considering with strange optimism that a Government majority of 6,000 was "a much more reasonable starting point for electoral calculation." Finally, it was claimed that the expulsion was necessary because the Executive's duty was "to protect the democratic rights" of "the vast majority of our membership."

Following this reaffirmation of the Executive's obduracy Sir Stafford, at a mass meeting in Newcastle on February 5, launched a nation-wide campaign for a six-point petition,* containing the gist of his programme, addressed to the Labour, Liberal and Co-operative Parties. It was to be claimed in the *Daily Herald*, on the strength of mathematical calculations by Mr. Ernest Hunter, that the Cripps campaign was a "flop," though at the same time that newspaper gracefully excused itself from indicating how many letters they had received for and against Cripps on the grounds that it would be "quite unsound to draw conclusions" from such figures. Yet the series of mass meetings held in the principal centres of the country by Sir Stafford to further the petition campaign were all enormously enthusiastic and registered record attendances.

*Given in Mr. Poole's article, LABOUR MONTHLY, March, 1939, p. 143.

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At all these meetings Sir Stafford made recruitment for the Labour Party a feature of his appeal, securing everywhere a remarkable response—500 at Manchester, 374 at Liverpool, 247 at Edinburgh, 770 at Glasgow (compared with 245 at a Labour Party recruiting meeting in the same city), and 671 at the big mass rally in London's Empress Stadium, to cite only a few examples. Yet those who might have been thought most pleased by such increases in party membership looked askance at the recruits thus offered them. A circular from Mr. G. R. Shepherd, national agent, urged that "unless care is exercised, it may be that certain parties will find their present loyal membership outvoted by persons who do not accept the constitution, programme, principles and policy of the Labour Party." How did this square with the leading article of the *Daily Herald* (May 14, 1938) proclaiming that the statement on "Labour and the Popular Front" "not only opens the way for all sections of the Labour movement to join in the march to a Labour Government, it opens the way to people of all parties and no parties to join in also?"

Contrasting with the rank and file enthusiasm for the petition campaign, with its suggestive response from those hitherto unmoved by Labour Party appeals, there were indications of further support for the Executive. This came, for instance, from the Executive Committee of the Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council of the Party, from the Scottish and Yorkshire Labour M.P.s. It even appeared that some official elements in the unions were prepared to operate a split, as in the case of Birmingham, where the Borough Labour Party had passed a pro-Cripps resolution; the *Daily Herald* (February 22) reported that "a new trade union committee has just been constituted which entirely repudiates the Borough Labour Party's action. It includes four or five large unions in the city, the principal one remaining outside being the Amalgamated Engineering Union."

At the end of February the Party Executive decided to take further action, asked certain selected M.P.s and others who had been associated with Sir Stafford's campaign to withdraw their support immediately, "reaffirm their belief in the principles and policy of the Labour Party," or otherwise face expulsion. Seven prominent members of the Party were affected, including Messrs. Strauss, Bevan and Poole, all M.P.s, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Mr. Will Lawther (the Miners' acting president), and Mr. Robert Bruce. It will be noted that the majority of M.P.s and candidates who signed the original protest against Sir Stafford's expulsion were omitted. Mr. Strauss, Mr. Bevan and Sir Charles Trevelyan have defied the ban up to the moment of writing. Meantime the Executive has sent a declaration to all Party organisations, candidates and M.P.s announcing that association with the Popular Front campaign constitutes a violation of the conditions of Party membership; the campaign was described now as "subversive"—aiming to change fundamentally the basis and the objects of the

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Labour Party," to "destroy the Party's integrity" and to "endanger its independence."

So, as the Whitsun Conference nears, Transport House takes as its slogan "Socialism or Surrender." Most realistic-thinking people inside the Labour Party and out would say that it is precisely "Socialism" in this abstract sense that *implies* Surrender. "To put it bluntly," writes Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, "many younger party members suspect that the Executive's 'pure Socialism' means not the determination to achieve power, but the determination to wait until the millennium arrives according to pre-war rules" which "looks to us like suicidal mania in the present international crisis" (*New Statesman*, January 28). And how about the point made in the first pamphlet issued by the Cripps Petition Committee?

> As the Dictators press their claims for colonies the imperialist ruling classes may have to fight . . . not for democracy but for empire, and they will go into battle stripped of their strategical assets and without the allies they have betrayed. In that desperate struggle would the Labour Party, for the sake of Socialism, refuse its political collaboration? The chances are that it would again join a National Coalition, this time under Tory leadership. Out of that, with our civil liberties suspended and victory both distant and doubtful, what would emerge is more probably Fascism than Socialism.

Contrariwise, the proposals for united action of the people against the National Government visualise the organising of a popular mass movement around a common programme for better living conditions, for preserving democracy and peace. Clearly, as the Central Committee of the Communist Party pointed out in its answer to the Labour Party Executive's "Unity real or sham?" statement:

> Such a movement involves no compromise on basic political principles, no giving up of the independence of any of the parties who form such a combination. The proposals advanced are in no way an abandonment of Socialism, but, in the conditions of the moment, are the immediate stage in the advance to any future conquest of power and the establishment of Socialism.

One wonders, though, whether argument and reason really mean anything to people who are so "dotty" as to expel the man who is "the chief appeal on all our platforms." The bitter words are those of Mr. A. L. Rowse, long a leading intellectual supporter of the Executive, who cries that "the situation grows desperate; it is almost too late, and still the Labour Party refuses to see that it has any responsibility in the matter." In Labour Party policy "there is so much that is right, and yet we have been ineffective in putting it across the country," not only because the keys of power are in the hands of the ruling class, but because "the Labour Party plays into their hands. The root trouble is that it has so little sense of power" (*Manchester Guardian*, February 8).

Yet the signs of change in Party opinion are growing. The agenda for the Whitsun Conference of the Labour Party includes 25 resolu-

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tions on the Popular Front, of which only 6 support the Executive's line. There are also 20 resolutions on the expulsion of Sir Stafford Cripps, and only two support the Executive. When that body on March 22 discussed further disciplinary action against recalcitrant Popular Fronters a proposal to do nothing until the Conference was only defeated by 13 votes to 11 ; and Sir Stafford has stated categorically that he has no intention of forming a rival Party, at the same time offering to discuss some form of accommodation, given stronger opposition to Chamberlain. In these supremely critical days there can surely be no argument that the job of every one of us in the Labour movement is to do without stint everything that can be done so see that Southport decides in favour of action and advance.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Trouble in Porter Street, John Summerfield. *North Sea Spy*, Geoffrey Trease. (Key Books, Nos. 3 and 4. Fore Publications Ltd.) 2d. each. 64 pp.

Race and Civilisation. I. Harris, M.D. (Williams and Norgate.) 3s. 6d. 140 pp.

I Helped to Build an Army. José Martin Blásquez. (Secker and Warburg.) 15s. 361 pp.

La Leçon que l'Espagne Donne au Monde. José Diaz. Fr. 1.50. 58 pp. *Chine Héroique.* Tchen-Lin. Fr. 2.50. 88 pp. *Le Front Démocratique aux Etats-Unis.* Earl Browder. Fr. 3.50. 136 pp. *L'Ukraine.* Charles Steber. Fr. 2.50. 82 pp. (Bureau d' Editions.)

Memoirs of a Spanish Nationalist. Antonio Bahamonde. (United Editorial Ltd.) 6d. 138 pp.

Empire or Democracy ? Leonard Barnes. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 7s. 6d. 303 pp.

Why We Are Losing the Peace. K. Zilliacus. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 3s. 6d. 192 pp.

A Pact With Hitler. Martin Fuchs. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 12s. 6d. 352 pp.

India's National Income. V. K. R. V. Rao. (Allen and Unwin.) 6s. 173 pp.

What Is Philosophy ? Howard Selsam. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 5s. 192 pp.

Three Ways of Modern Man. Harry Slochower. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 6s. 240 pp.

Revolution in Spain. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 8s. 6d. 255 pp.

Economics and Politics ? Paul van Zeeland. (Cambridge University Press.) 2s. 6d. 56 pp.

National Service and the Workers. (Labour Research Department.) 2d. 23 pp.

Biology and Man : *Past and Future.* Professor Marcel Prenant. (Fact.) 6d. 89 pp.

English Captain. Tom Wintringham. (Faber and Faber.) 12s. 6d. 333 pp.

Chamberlain, Face the Facts. Wal Hannington. (National Unemployed Workers' Movement.) 1d. 15 pp.

Act Now. The Dean of Canterbury. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 2d. 64 pp.

My Years in Germany. Martha Dodd. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 10s. 6d. 319 pp.

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Karl Marx

BY HARRY POLLITT*

WE MEET ON the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, to commemorate the life and work of a thinker, genius and leader.

Although it was in England that Marx spent the major portion of his life and wrote his greatest and most fundamental works, recognition of Marxism has perhaps been more slow here than in any other country.

I am often struck by the fact that when foreign Socialists and Communists call upon me at our Party offices, the first thing they ask after the conversation is finished is as to the " best way they can visit the grave of Karl Marx."

And to-night, as I look around this meeting, I observe many who, like Marx, are exiles from the land of their birth and who, as John Goss sang so magnificently those revolutionary songs from many countries, I could not help observing that their eyes were not undimmed.

Now the recognition of the rôle of Marxism is coming slowly; as is also the fact that it was precisely on the basis of the most profound study of the political, economic and social conditions under British Imperialism that Marx was able to outline those fundamental principles which have helped to revolutionise and change the world.

The truth of what he taught gains force and authority as every current political event takes place. Never was the accuracy of the Marxian method of analysis, of stating the next tasks and how they shall be accomplished, so brilliantly accurate and justified as at the present moment.

The growing volume of Marxist opinion and thought is at last breaking through the criminal conspiracy that was organised against Marx when he was living, a conspiracy that was organised because his teachings in very truth did make the ruling class tremble.

It was perhaps Lenin who best exposed what Marx had to suffer, both in life and after death, when in his famous work, *State and Revolution*, he declared :

> During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes relentlessly persecute them, treat their teachings with malicious hostility, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaign of lies and slanders. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to surround their *names* with a certain halo for the " consolation " of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating the *content* of their revolutionary doctrine, vulgarising it, and blunting

*Speech delivered on the fifty-sixth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, at St. Pancras Town Hall on March 14, 1939.

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> its revolutionary edge. At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists in the labour movement concur in this "revision" of Marxism.

And never more than now were the bourgoisie and the opportunists in the Labour movement so busily engaged in trying to vulgarise and revise revolutionary Marxism.

When Marx came to England, it was at the moment when Chartism, whose Centenary we are celebrating this year was a living movement, reaching the highest point of its greatness and power. He saw at once the significance of this movement, mixed freely and joyously with the Chartist leaders, studied every aspect of the movement most deeply, and, on the occasion of the anniversary of Ernest Jones' paper, the *People's Paper*, the paper associated with the Chartist Movement, he paid a remarkably high tribute to the character of the English working class as fighters, holding them up as a model.

> The English working men are the first born sons of modern industry. They will then, certainly, not be the last in aiding the social revolution produced by that industry, a revolution which means the emancipation of their own class all over the world, which is as universal as capital-rule and wages-slavery. I know the heroic struggles the English working class have gone through since the middle of the last century—struggles less glorious because they are shrouded in obscurity and burked by the middle-class historians to revenge the misdeeds of the ruling class . . . .

The experiences and lessons of Chartism were undoubtedly one of the most vital elements which enabled Marx to build up his theory, the theory the practical application of which has led to the establishment of the modern working-class movement.

He saw that the early working-class movement, despite its numbers, energies, strength and capacity for sacrifice, was weak through lack of a clear social theory to guide and steer it through all its turbulent struggles.

He saw too that the early theories of Socialism were weak and unable to give that political consciousness and understanding; because Socialism was, so to speak, placed on a pedestal, removed from the current class struggles and unrelated to them, and here we are bound to note how the vulgarisers and distorters of Marx in Transport House to-day again endeavour to put Socialism on a pedestal—a socialism that has no relation to the present fight against the ruling class and its chief representative, Chamberlain.

Marx set himself the task to place on an indestructible scientific basis the whole theory of Socialism, Communism and the working-class movement, and from the moment he embodied this, not only in his monumental works, but in his daily advice and articles in the varied circles with which he came into contact, the way forward became crystal clear.

It is this achievement and basis which made Karl Marx the founder of the modern working-class movement, in whose early years, in so many lands, he played such a decisive and leading rôle.

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But he not only set Socialism as the final aim of all working-class activity, he showed how it can be achieved, how the working class in the midst of its present struggles are able to advance towards the conquest of power and a complete change of society.

He made clear, too, the relations between the fight for democracy and the fight for Socialism, and none was so zealous as Marx in understanding and showing the importance of the working class defending every hard-won right it had already established and seeking to continually extend these rights.

It is very important to remember this to-day, when capitalism in decline seeks fascism as its final method of terrorism to destroy democracy in order to protect the maintenance of its system of rent, interest and profit.

And there are many to-day who are so loud-mouthed in their protestations for Socialism and Revolution and who despise democracy and the struggle for its maintenance so much, who might, with very great profit to themselves, read once again what Marx had to say about democracy and the need to defend it. If this were done it might help to end the vicious types of anti-working class and anti-democratic propaganda that in the present situation only result in a strengthening of the ruling class and a weakening of the forces of the Labour and democratic movement.

So too, in these critical times, when the fight for unity and the People's Front is one of the foremost political issues of the day, is it more than ever essential to show the importance that Marx attached to the working class winning support from other sections of the population and endeavouring to build an alliance with them in order to defeat the main reactionary force arrayed against them at each specific stage of the struggle.

He bitterly attacked those who tried to isolate the Socialists in one camp by themselves and to treat the rest of society as " one reactionary mass." He showed that this policy helped reaction at every stage of the struggle and postponed the final victory of the working class.

Who, to-day, can read his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and his polemic against the formulation of Lassalle about the rest of society being " one reactionary mass," without being able at once to see its immediate political application in the circumstances of our time?

And in this connection it is timely to recall the famous letter of Frederick Engels to Bernstein, dealing precisely with this question of one reactionary mass :

> The real weakness is the childish notion of the coming revolution which is supposed to *begin* by. . . .the whole world dividing itself into two armies; we here, the " one reactionary mass " there. That means that the revolution is to begin with the *fifth act*, and not with the first in which the mass of all the oppositional parties stands together against the government and its blunders and thus is victorious, upon which the separate parties among the victors one after another wear themselves

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out, make themselves impossible, until finally by this means the mass of the people is thrust wholly onto our side and then Vollmar's much vaunted decisive battle can proceed.

Lenin also, in an exceptionally brilliant passage exposes the political bankruptcy of those who cannot understand the need for the class-conscious workers seeking allies from all discontented classes, groups and elements of the population, where he says:

> To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* with revolts by small nations in the colonies and Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of non-class-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the church, the monarchy, the foreign nations, etc.—to imagine that means *repudiating social revolution*. Apparently they imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, "We are for socialism," and in another place another army will say "We are for imperialism," and that this will be social revolution! . . . Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. . . . . *Objectively*, the mass movement broke the back of Tsarism and paved the way for democracy; and for that reason the class conscious workers led it. The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything else* than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements.

But nowhere should this particular aspect of Marx's teaching and its subsequent elaboration by Frederick Engels, Lenin and Stalin be studied more closely than by the reactionary leaders of the Labour Party, who to-day, from their pedestal in Transport House, are endeavouring to oppose the organised working-class movement seeking support and allies from all other sections of the democratic and progressive people of this country in order to establish a common fight against Chamberlain; Chamberlain and his Government which at this moment are the main reactionary forces against which the whole united strength of the Labour and democratic movement has now to be exerted, if the people of Britain are to avoid facing what the people of Spain and Czechoslovakia are facing now.

When the English working-class movement, after the defeat of Chartism sank for a period into apathy and seemed to give chief attention to the development of narrow, limited craft trade unions in which craft prejudices and sectional jealousies were rampant and in which political activity and thought seemed to be at a very low ebb, Marx revealed the many-sided character of his approach to every problem by his ability to work with the leaders of these craft unions, however limited their own personal outlooks may have been.

He found those common points in joint association with them, in which the fight against capitalism could be carried on, so that out of that fight and its growing repercussions, political consciousness

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also developed and the need for a clear political line became more correctly understood.

He was undoubtedly the first to stress the necessity for international working-class unity and his delight knew no bounds when he was able to collaborate, after the letter of the London Trades Council to the Polish workmen and the visit of a French deputation to London, with the leaders of the English trade unions, and help them to build up the first International which was established in September, 1864.

Marx drafted the inaugural address on the occasion of the foundation of the First International and to-day this document can be read and studied with profit, time and time again.

What an ironic comment it is and how it also shames a little to remember that it was in London that the First International was established, but it is also from London now that the policy of the Labour leaders alone prevents the development of a full international working-class unity in the present unprecedentedly urgent situation.

In drafting the inaugural address, Marx had to take into account the most diverse industrial and political tendencies existing amongst those who made up the representation at that First Congress, from England, France, Italy, Poland and Germany. And yet the fact that his address was adopted was a tremendous tribute to the unifying character of Marx's thoughts, ideas and leadership, and Engels was a thousand times right when, in his preface to the English edition of the *Communist Manifesto* he wrote :

> The International on its breaking up in 1874, left the workers quite different men from what it had found them in 1864.

Marx always pointed emphasis at the importance of the working class concerning itself in foreign affairs and urging them to exert their influence to force changes in the foreign policies of the governments of the day.

In his inaugural address to the first International, he brought this point out in the following way :

> If the emancipation of the working class requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfil that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure ? It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes, but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic. The shameless approval, mock sympathy, or idiotic indifference, with which the upper classes of Europe have witnessed the mountain fortress of the Caucasus falling a prey to, and heroic Poland being assassinated by Russia : the immense and unresisted encroachments of that barbarous power, whose head is at St. Petersburg, *and whose hands are in every cabinet of Europe, have taught the working classes the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary*, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent,

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> to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.
>
> The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes.
>
> Proletarians of all countries, Unite !

How proud would Marx be if he knew that such a policy *was* being carried out by the Russia to-day, the home of Socialism, the home of the Third International.

The Anniversary of the Paris Commune also draws near and in this connection, at this particular moment, it is inevitable that we should think of Spain, for after the Paris Commune the capitulators raised their heads, as they are raising them now in the Spanish question. After the Paris Commune there were many who could be found to exclaim "the struggle had been in vain"—as similar elements are making the same exclamations in regard to Spain.

How Marx lashed these fainthearts, these men who had lost faith in the working class and in the fact that historical development assures its ultimate victory. How he seared with language that can never die those who were responsible for organising the blood-shed and barbarities against the Parisian workers :

> Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them . . . .
>
> The Parisian workers have been crushed by superior force, crushed but not destroyed; they have been defeated, and yet it is their opponents who are really vanquished. . . ."

How true this is also of Spain at the present moment. The Spanish people are not destroyed; they have been defeated, and yet it is really their opponents who are vanquished. Do you believe that this great popular movement of the Spanish people can be destroyed ? These people who have fought with an heroism unparalleled in the history of the class struggle, for 32 months, who have seen things that men and women were never meant to see ? Whose children at Figueras ran out to pick up from the streets the gaudily decorated boxes that the Italian bombers had dropped and on untying the ribbons of these boxes, bombs inside exploded and blew off their little fingers and half their faces ? Do you think that such people as these are ever going to forget ?

We pillory those now who are responsible for these outrages. All the prayers of all their priests, as Marx said, will not avail to redeem them.

We must stimulate and encourage the feelings that will inevitably arise for revenge. For we need now, more than ever, that unshakeable confidence that Marx always displayed in the final victory of the working class. That confidence of Marx has been more than justified.

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The victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. is the living proof of the correctness of Marxist teachings. He may lie quietly in a shabby grave in Highgate Cemetery, but no man born of a woman ever had such a monument as he has in the existence on one-sixth of the world's surface of a society which to-day, as the reports of the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union show, is already passing from the first stage of Socialism into Communism and the complete classless society.

This month, too, is the the 20th anniversary of the Communist International, which to-day has a membership of 1,200,000 and alongside it the Young Communist International, with a membership of 746,000 in the capitalist countries. This powerful united disciplined army carries on its struggles under the banner of Marxism, enriched by the teachings of Engels, Lenin and Stalin; an army that cannot be suppressed, defeated or intimidated; an army advancing towards achieving the complete unification of the entire international Labour movement; an army that knows the whole of historical development is on our side, that whatever setbacks or temporary defeats may be experienced, the future is ours.

We therefore call for a renewed study of all the works of Karl Marx, not to turn men into bookworms and armchair philosophers, not only for theoretical study, but as guides to our every-day actions, for these works are based on scientific study as well as the accumulated practical experiences of the working class in Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, England, Ireland, India and Russia. We have unique opportunities for obtaining Marx' works to-day. On this platform to-night we have listened to our veteran leader, Tom Mann. If he, and those with him who were the pioneers of our Labour movement had had the opportunities that we have at the present time, then we would not be talking about defeating Chamberlain, we would be doing what they are already doing in the Soviet Union—building Socialism.

And here too it is necessary to make a call for increased support for Marx House. To make Marx House a really powerful Marxian educational centre to which Labour Parties, Trade Union branches, Co-operative Guilds, Trades Councils and Branches of the Communist Party all should be affiliated in order to guarantee that the masses who to-day are hungry for knowledge, can be supplied with a correct Marxian education, free from vulgarisation and distortion such as is to-day the characteristic of the N.C.L.C. so-called " Marxist " education.

To study, to learn, and to act. This is the best tribute we can pay to the memory of the genius who was a revolutionary, human fighter; always close to the workers; a man driven from one country after another by the ruling classes of his time; who suffered dire poverty and necessity; who loved his home and family; a genius, who to know, was to love, admire and follow; who loved the things that the common

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people loved; but who fought without mercy their class enemies and those who would betray them from within their own ranks; a genius who hurled his challenges to capitalist society; whose pen and voice whose fire, is that of no other man of his time.

To-night, in paying homage to Karl Marx, we dedicate ourselves anew to his and our cause and proudly declaim the closing words from the immortal *Communist Manifesto* of 1847:

> The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. . . .

We will win that world!

OUR CONTENTS

This number goes to press at a moment which it needs no great degree of political development to recognise as one of the most critical in our history and in the history of Europe. Even those who up to now have taken "no interest in politics" see that the actions of politicians affect their lives. And they want to know "what it is all about." We have chosen our contents with a view to giving, as far as possible in the space at our disposal, the answers to the most important questions that face the people of this country to-day. The Notes of the Month appear again after an interval of two months due to the illness of the Editor, and we are sure that our readers will find this analysis of the position and this guide to future action more invaluable than ever. If the number of other articles is less than is usually included in an issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, *it is because it has seemed better to deal thoroughly with a few of the many questions that are arising than partially with a greater number.*

We have, therefore, held over several important articles. Among these is a special article on the situation in India in connection with the Tripuri Session of the Indian National Congress which will appear next month. In the May number we shall also publish an important article on the U.S.A. by John Strachey and one on the situation in Palestine following the termination of the Arab-Jewish Conference. We have also held over an article on Armaments and Unemployment by John Knight. The inclusion of these as well as the usual ones which keep our readers up to date with the now rapidly altering situation will make the May number of no less importance and interest than the present one.

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DOCUMENTS OF THE MONTH

FIRST PART OF STALIN'S REPORT TO THE XVIII CONGRESS OF THE C.P.S.U., HELD IN MOSCOW, MARCH 10, 1939.

FIVE YEARS HAVE gone by since the time of the Seventeenth Congress. As you see this is no small period. The world has managed in this period to undergo considerable changes. States and countries, their mutual relations in many respects, have become quite different.

What changes exactly have taken place in this period in the international situation? What exactly has changed in the international and internal position of our country?

For capitalist countries, this period has been one of the most serious upheavals both in the economic and political sphere. In the economic sphere these years have been years of depression, and then beginning with the second half of the year 1937—years of a new economic crisis, years of new decline of industry in the U.S.A., England and France—consequently years of new economic complications.

In the political sphere these have been years of serious political conflicts and upheavals.

It is already the second year that a new imperialist war has been going on waged on a huge expanse of territory from Shanghai to Gibraltar and involving over 500 millions of population. The map of Europe, Africa and Asia is being violently changed. The entire system of post-war so-called peace régime has been shaken to its foundation.

For the Soviet Union, on the contrary, these have been years of its growth and prosperity, years of its further economic and cultural advance, years of further growth of its political and military might, years of its struggle for the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

Such is the general picture.

Let us examine the concrete data regarding the changes in the international situation.

The economic crisis which began in capitalist countries in the second half of 1929 continued to the end of 1933. After this, the crisis passed into depression and then a certain revival, a certain advance of industry began. But this revival of industry did not develop into prosperity as is usually the case in the period of revival.

On the contrary, beginning with the second half of 1937, a new economic crisis began which took hold of the United States in the first place, and then England and France, and a number of other countries.

Thus the capitalist countries had hardly succeeded in recovering from the blows of the recent economic crisis before they found themselves face to face with a new economic crisis.

This circumstance naturally led to the intensification of unemployment. Unemployment figures in capitalist countries which had fallen from 30,000,000 in 1933 to 14,000,000 in 1937, now rose again as a result of the new economic crisis to 18,000,000.

The characteristic feature of the new crisis is that it differs in many respects from the previous crisis, and in these respects it is worse and not better.

First, the new crisis did not begin after a period of industrial prosperity as was the case in 1929, but after depression and a certain revival which, however, did not develop into prosperity. This means that the present crisis will be more severe and that it will be more difficult to combat than the previous crisis. Further, the present crisis has broken out not in peace time but in a period of the second imperialist war which has already begun, when Japan, which is already in the second year of her war with China, is disorganising the immense Chinese market, and is rendering it almost inaccessible to commodities of other countries, when Italy and Germany have already switched their national economies over to a basis of war economy and have spent their reserves of war materials and currency in doing so, when all remaining big capitalist powers are beginning to reorganise on a war basis.

This means that capitalism will possess far less resources for a normal way out of the present crisis than in the period of the previous crisis. Finally, as distinct from the previous crisis, the present crisis is not a general one but involves for the time being mainly the economically powerful countries which have not yet switched over to the path of war economy. As regards the aggressor countries such as Japan, Germany and Italy, which have already reorganised their economy on a war basis, they have not yet, because of the intense development of their war industry, reached the stage of a crisis of overproduction, although they are approaching it.

This means that when the economically powerful non-aggressor countries will begin to emerge from the period of crisis, aggressor powers having exhausted their reserves of gold and raw

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materials in the course of war fever, will have to enter a period of most intense crisis.

This is clearly illustrated if we but take the data regarding visible gold reserves in capitalist countries. At the end of 1936, the visible gold reserves in all capitalist countries, in millions of old gold dollars, totalled 12,980, in the United States 6,649, in England 2,029, in France 1,769, Holland 289, Belgium 373, Switzerland 387, Germany 16, Italy 123, Japan 273. In September of 1938 the total was 14,301. Visible gold reserves amounted in the United States to 8,126, England 2,396, France 1,435, Holland 595, Belgium 318, Switzerland 407, Germany 17, Italy 124, Japan 97. All these figures are in million gold dollars.

Here are a few figures illustrating the condition of the crisis of industry of capitalist countries during the last five years and the dynamics of industrial progress in the U.S.S.R.

The volume of industrial output in percentages of the year 1929 amounted in the United States to 66.4 per cent. in 1934, 75 per cent. in 1935, 88.1 per cent. in 1936, 92.2 per cent. in 1937, and 72 per cent. in 1938.

For England, the corresponding figures are: 98.8 per cent. in 1934, 105.8 per cent. in 1935, 115.9 per cent. in 1936, 123.7 per cent. in 1937, and 112 per cent. in 1938.

For France, the figures are: 71 per cent. in 1934, 67.4 per cent. in 1935, 79.3 per cent. in 1936, 82.8 per cent. in 1937, and 70 per cent. in 1938.

For Italy, the figures are: 80 per cent. in 1934, 93.8 per cent. in 1935, 87.5 per cent. in 1936, 99.6 per cent. in 1937, and 96 per cent. in 1938.

For Germany, the figures are: 79.8 per cent. in 1934, 94 per cent. in 1935, 106.3 per cent. in 1936, 117.2 per cent. in 1937, and 125 per cent. in 1938.

For Japan, the figures are: 128.7 per cent. in 1934, 141.8 per cent. in 1935, 151.1 per cent. in 1936, 170.8 per cent. in 1937, and 165 per cent. in 1938.

For the U.S.S.R., the figures are: 238.3 per cent. in 1934, 293.4 per cent. in 1935, 382.3 per cent. in 1936, 424 per cent. in 1937, and 477 per cent. in 1938.

From this table it can be seen that the Soviet Union is the only country in the world which knows nothing of crises and where industry is on the upgrade all the time. From this table it can further be seen that a serious economic crisis has already begun and is developing in the United States, Great Britain and France. From this table it can further be seen that already in 1938 a period of downward movement of industry began in Italy and Japan which were ahead of Germany in switching their national economies over to the basis of war economy.

Finally, from this table it can be seen that in Germany, which was behind Italy and Japan in organising its economy on a war basis, there is still a certain upward movement in industry, true a small one, similar to what took place until recently in Japan and Italy.

There can be no doubt that unless something unforeseen occurs, the same downward movement as has already taken place in Japan and Italy, must take place in German industry. For what does it mean to switch the economy of a country over to a basis of war economy? It means giving industry a one-sided war trend in every way to increase the output of goods necessary for war, goods which are not for the consumption of the people, in every way restrict production, especially articles of popular consumption for the market—consequently, reduce the consumption of the people and confront the country with an economic crisis. Such is the concrete picture of the movement of the new economic crisis in capitalist countries.

Naturally, such an unfavourable turn of economic affairs could not but lead to the sharpening of relations between powers. Already, the previous crisis reshuffled the cards and led to the sharpening of the struggle for markets, for sources of raw materials.

The seizure of Manchuria and North China by Japan, the seizure of Abyssinia by Italy—all this reflected the acuteness of the struggle between powers. The new economic crisis must lead, and certainly leads, to a further sharpening of the imperialist struggle. It is no longer a question of competition for markets, of a trade war, or of dumping. These methods of struggle have long been recognised as inadequate. It is a question of a new redivision of the world, of spheres of influence and colonies by military action.

Japan began to justify her aggressive actions by the argument that when the Nine-Power Pact was concluded, she was robbed of its due, and was prevented from extending her territory at the expense of China, whereas England and France possess enormous colonies.

Italy recalled that she was robbed of its due when the booty was divided up after the first imperialist war, and that she must recompense herself at the expense of the spheres of influence of Britain and France.

Germany, which suffered severely as a result of the first imperialist war, and of the Versailles Peace, joined with Japan and Italy and demanded the extension of her territory in Europe,

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and the return of colonies of which she was deprived by the victors in the first imperialist war.

Thus it was that the bloc of the three aggressor powers began to take shape. The question of a new redivision of the world by means of war arose.

The following is an enumeration of the most important events during the period under review which marked the beginning of a new imperialist war.

In 1935, Italy attacked Abyssinia and seized it. In the summer of 1936, Germany and Italy organised military intervention in Spain, Germany establishing her domination in the North of Spain and in Spanish Morocco, and Italy in the South of Spain and in the Balearic Islands.

In 1937, Japan, after the seizure of Manchuria, invaded North and Central China, occupied Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai and began to squeeze out her foreign competitors from the occupied zone.

In the beginning of 1938, Germany seized Austria, and in the Autumn of 1938, the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia.

At the end of 1938 Japan seized Canton, and at the beginning of 1939, the Hainan Island. Thus war which so imperceptibly stole upon nations, has drawn into its orbit a population of over 500 million and has affected a vast territory extending from Tientsin, Shanghai and Canton through Abyssinia to Gibraltar.

After the first imperialist war, the victors, primarily England, France and the United States, set up a new system of relationships between countries, a post-war peace system. The main props of this system were the Nine-Power Treaty in the Far East, the Versailles Treaty, and a number of other treaties in Europe.

The League of Nations was to regulate relationships between countries within the framework of this system, on the basis of a united front of states, of collective defence of the security of states. However, three aggressor states, and the imperialist war launched by them, have turned upside down this post-war peace system.

Japan tore up the Nine-Power Treaty and Germany and Italy the Versailles Treaty. In order to have their hands free, these three states withdrew from the League of Nations. A new imperialist war has become a fact.

In our times it is not easy to break loose suddenly and plunge straight into war, disregarding treaties of various kinds, disregarding public opinion. Bourgeois politicians are quite well aware of this. So are the fascist chieftains aware of this. That is why fascist chieftains, before plunging into war, decided to work up public opinion in a definite way to suit their ends, that is, to mislead, to deceive it.

A military bloc of Germany and Italy against the interests of England and France in Europe? Really, that's no bloc at all! "We," have no military bloc of any sort. All "we" have is a harmless "Berlin-Rome axis," *i.e.*, just a certain geometrical formula dealing with the axis. A military bloc of Germany, Italy and Japan against the interests of the United States, England and France in the Far East? Nothing of the kind! "We" have no military bloc of any sort. All "we" have is a harmless "Berlin-Rome-Tokio triangle," *i.e.*, a slight penchant for geometry. War against the interests of England, France and the United States? Nonsense! "We" are waging a war against the Comintern, not against these States. If you don't believe it read "the Anti-Comintern Pact" concluded between Italy, Germany and Japan.

This is how Messieurs aggressors thought they would deceive public opinion, although it was not difficult to discern that this whole clumsy game at camouflage was preposterous because it is ridiculous to look for "centres" of the Comintern in the deserts of Mongolia, in the mountains of Abyssinia, in the wastes of Spanish Morocco. But war is inexorable. It cannot be concealed behind any veil. For no "axes," "triangles" and "anti-Comintern Pacts" can conceal the fact that Japan, during this period seized a vast territory in China, that Italy has seized Abyssinia, Germany has seized Austria and Sudeten region, Germany and Italy have seized Spain and all this in opposition to the interests of non-aggressor States.

The war has remained a war, the military bloc of aggressors—a military bloc, and the aggressors—aggressors.

The characteristic feature of the new imperialist war is that it has not yet become a universal world war. A war is waged by aggressor states which are infringing in every way upon the interests of non-aggressor States, primarily England, France and the United States, while the latter are drawing back and retreating, making concession after concession to the aggressors. Thus an open redivision of the world and of spheres of influence is taking place before our eyes, at the expense of the interests of non-aggressor States, without the least attempt at resistance, and even with a certain amount of connivance by the latter. Incredible, but it is a fact.

How is this one-sided and strange

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character of the new imperialist war to be explained? How could it happen that non-aggressor countries, with vast possibilities at their disposal, have so easily and without any resistance abandoned their positions and their obligations to please the aggressors? Can it be explained by the weakness of non-aggressor States?

Of course not! The non-aggressor democratic States combined are unquestionably stronger than the fascist States, both economically and militarily. Such being the case, how can systematic concessions made by these States to the aggressors be explained?

This might be explained for instance by fear of Revolution which may break out should the non-aggressor States become involved in war, and should war become world-wide. Bourgeois politicians know, of course, that the first imperialist world war brought about the victory of the Revolution in one of the biggest countries. They are afraid that a second imperialist world war may also lead to the victory of the Revolution in one or in several countries.

But at present this is not the sole, or even the main reason. The main reason is that the majority of the non-aggressor countries, and primarily England and France, have abandoned the policy of collective security, the policy of collective resistance to the aggressors, that they have taken up a position of non-intervention, a position of "neutrality."

Formally, the policy of non-intervention might be described in the following words: "Let each country defend itself against the aggressors as it likes and as well as it can. It does not concern us. We shall trade both with the aggressors and with their victims."

In actual fact, however, the policy of non-intervention is tantamount to connivance at aggression, to unleashing war—consequently to its transformation into a world war. Through the policy of non-intervention there runs the eagerness and desire not to prevent the aggressors from perpetrating their black deeds, not to prevent, say, Japan from becoming involved in a war with China, or better still, with the Soviet Union; not to prevent, say, Germany from becoming enmeshed in European affairs, from becoming involved in a war with the Soviet Union; to allow all belligerents to sink deep into the mire of war, to stealthily encourage them to follow this line, to allow them to weaken and exhaust one another, and then, when they become sufficiently weakened, to appear on the scene with fresh forces, to come out, of course "in the interests of peace," and to dictate their terms to weakened belligerent nations. It is cheap, and it serves its purpose!

Take, for instance, Japan. It is worth noting that before Japan's invasion of North China, all influential French and British newspapers loudly proclaimed China's weakness, her inability to offer resistance, and that with her army Japan could subjugate China in two or three months. Subsequently, European and American politicians began to watch and wait. And later, when Japan did engage in war, they let her have Shanghai, the heart of the foreign capital in China, they let her have Canton, centre of British monopoly influence in South China, they let her have Hainan and allowed her to surround Hong Kong. Isn't this very much like encouraging the aggressor? As if they were saying, "Get deeper into the war, and then we shall see."

Or take Germany for instance. They let her have Austria, despite the obligation to defend Austria's independence, they ceded the Sudeten region, they left Czechoslovakia to her own fate, thereby violating all and every obligation, and then began to lie vociferously in the press about "the weakness of the Russian Army," about "the demoralisation of the Russian air force," about the "riots" in the Soviet Union, urging the Germans to march further East, promising them easy pickings and prompting them on: just you start war against the Bolsheviks, and then everything will proceed nicely. It must be admitted that this also looks very much like egging on, like encouraging the aggressor.

The fuss raised by the British, French and North American press about Soviet Ukraine is characteristic. The gentlemen of this press grew hoarse shouting that the Germans were marching on Soviet Ukraine, that they now had in their hands so-called Carpathian Ukraine with a population of some 700,000, and that not later than this Spring the Germans would annex Soviet Ukraine with a population of over 30,000,000 to so-called Carpathian Ukraine. It looks as if the object of this suspicious fuss was to raise the ire of the Soviet Union against Germany, to poison the atmosphere and provoke a conflict with Germany without any visible grounds for it.

Of course it is fully possible that there are madmen in Germany who dream of annexing the elephant, *i.e.*, Soviet Ukraine, to the gnat, *i.e.*, so-called Carpathian Ukraine. And if there really are such madmen in Germany, it is certain that we shall find a sufficient quantity of straight jackets for such madmen.

But if we ignore madmen and turn to normal people, is it not clear that it is ridiculous and stupid to talk seriously

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of annexing Soviet Ukraine to so-called Carpathian Ukraine? Just think of it. The gnat comes to the elephant and says, with arms akimbo: "Ah, brother, how sorry I am for you. You live without landlords, without capitalists, without national oppression, without fascist bosses. Do you call that life? I look at you and I can't help seeing that there is no salvation for you unless you join me. Well, then, be it so, I permit you to join your tiny bit of territory to my vast domains."

It is still more characteristic that some European and American politicians and newspapermen who have lost patience waiting for "the march on Soviet Ukraine" are themselves beginning to reveal the real background of the policy of non-intervention. They openly state and write in black and white that the Germans have "disappointed" them cruelly, that instead of marching on further East against the Soviet Union, they have turned to the West, if you please, and demand colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany as a price for an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, and now the Germans refuse to pay the note, telling their creditors to go chase themselves. Far be it from me to sermonise apropos of the policy of non-intervention, to speak of betrayal, of treachery, etc. It would be naïve to preach morals to people who recognise no human morality. Politics are politics, as old and hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game which the adherents of the policy of non-intervention have started, may end in a serious failure for themselves. Such is the real face of the now dominant policy of non-intervention. Such is the political situation in the capitalist countries.

War has created a new situation in relations between countries. It has brought an atmosphere of alarm and uncertainty into these relations. By undermining the foundations of a post-war peace system and overriding the elementary principles of international law, war has called in question the value of international treaties and obligations.

Pacifism and disarmament schemes are dead and buried. Feverish arming has taken their place. Everybody began arming, from small states to big states, including those, and primarily those, states which practise the policy of non-intervention. Nobody believes any longer in unctuous speeches, alleging that the Munich concessions to the aggressors and the Munich agreement, have opened a new era of "appeasement." They are disbelieved even by the signatories to the Munich agreement Britain and France, which began increasing their armaments no less than other countries. Naturally, the U.S.S.R. could not ignore these portentious events. There is no doubt that any war, however small, started by the aggressors in any remote corner of the world, is a danger to the peaceable countries. All the more serious, then, is the danger arising from the new imperialist war, which has already drawn into its orbit over 500 million people in Asia, Africa and Europe. Consequently, while it unswervingly pursues the policy of preserving peace, our country has at the same time exerted great efforts to strengthen the fighting preparedness of our Red Army and our Red Navy.

At the same time, in order to consolidate its international position, the Soviet Union decided upon certain other steps, too.

At the end of 1934, our country joined the League of Nations, considering that with all the weakness of the League it could still serve as a place for the exposure of aggressors, and as a certain instrument of peace which, though weak, could act as a brake on the unleashing of war.

The Soviet Union considers that even a weak international organisation like the League of Nations should not be disdained in such troubled times.

In May, 1935, France and the Soviet Union concluded a pact of mutual assistance against possible attacks by aggressors. Simultaneously an analogous pact was concluded with Czechoslovakia.

In March, 1936, the Soviet Union concluded a pact of mutual assistance with the Mongolian People's Republic.

In August, 1937, the Soviet Union concluded a pact of non-aggression with the Chinese Republic. In such difficult international conditions, the Soviet Union has pursued its foreign policy, upheld the cause of the preservation of peace.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and understandable: firstly, we stand for peace and for the strengthening of businesslike relations with all countries, this is our position and we will adhere to it as long as these countries maintain identical relations with the Soviet Union, as long as they make no attempt to violate our country's interests.

Secondly, we stand for peaceable, close and neighbourly relations with all neighbouring countries which have a common frontier with the U.S.S.R., this is our position and we shall adhere to it as long as these countries maintain identical relations with the Soviet Union, as long as they make no attempt

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to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and security of the frontiers of the Soviet State.

Thirdly, we stand for the rendering of support to nations which have fallen prey to aggression, and are fighting for the independence of their countries.

Fourthly, we are not afraid of threats from aggressors, and we are ready to retaliate with two blows for one against the instigators of war, who attempt to infringe the integrity of the Soviet borders. Such is the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

In its foreign policy the Soviet Union relies upon :

Firstly, its growing economic, political and cultural strength;

Secondly, the moral and political unity of our Soviet society;

Thirdly, the friendship between the peoples of our country;

Fourthy, its Red Army and Red Navy;

Fifthly, its policy of peace;

Sixthly, the moral support of the working people of all countries to whom the preservation of peace is of vital concern;

Seventhly, the common sense of countries which for one reason or another are not interested in the violation of peace.

The tasks of the Party in the sphere of foreign policy are :

Firstly, to pursue also in future a policy of peace and of strengthening the businesslike relations with all countries;

Secondly, to be careful and not allow our country to be involved in conflicts by instigators of war who are used to get other people to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them;

Thirdly, to strengthen the fighting power of our Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost;

Fourthly, to strengthen our international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries who are interested in peace and friendship between nations.

STALIN'S HISTORIC SPEECH

Report to the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, March, 1939

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BOOK REVIEWS

Rescuing the Classics

The Lessing Legend by Franz Mehring. (Critics Group Pamphlet No. 11 New York, 1938.) 25 cents.

BY ADDING A work of Franz Mehring to its reprints of the classics of Marxist literary analysis, the American Critics Group has performed a welcome service to our movement. We in the English-speaking countries know all too little of this staunch revolutionary who held aloft the banner of proletarian internationalism in the darkest days of the imperialist war. A co-editor of " Die Neue Zeit," the leading organ of German Social Democracy, since 1891, Mehring became a founder of the Spartakus League and of the German Communist Party. He died, shortly after the murder of his comrades Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, in his 73rd year on January 29, 1919. Mehring was not only a fearless fighter for the proletarian cause, he was also one of the greatest scholars of our movement and, with Plekhanov, a pioneer of Marxist art and literary analysis. " If, according to Marx and Engels," Rosa Luxemburg wrote to him on his 70th birthday on February 27, 1916, " the German proletariat is the historic heir of classic German philosophy, then you have been the executor of the estate. You have saved from the camp of the bourgeoisie and brought to us, into the camp of the socially disinherited, whatever was still left to the bourgeoisie of the golden treasure of its former intellect and culture. Through your books, as through your articles, you have inseparably united the German proletariat not only with classic German philosophy, but with classic literature as well, not only with Kant and Hegel, but with Lessing, Schiller and Goethe. You taught our workers, by every line from your splendid pen, that socialism is not a mere knife-and-fork problem, but a cultural movement, a great and proud attitude toward life."

The *Lessing Legend* is a brilliant example of Mehring's achievement in rescuing the classics of German culture from the distortion to which they were subjected by the ideologists of Prussian imperialism and in preserving their true, revolutionary heritage for the workers. (When it first appeared, in serial form, in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1892, Engels wrote to Kautsky that each instalment made him impatient to see the next issue of the magazine.) It was then the custom in official academic circles to regard the emergence of German classical literature during the latter half of the eighteenth century as a direct result of the rise of Prussian military despotism under Frederick II. Mehring fearlessly exposed the fallacy of this legend so convenient for the "milites gloriosi" of the Wilhelmian autocracy. He did so, first, by disclosing the roots of Frederick's much advertised " enlightenment," and in the second place, by a concrete analysis of Lessing's attitude to the petty despotism of eighteenth century Germany. Without in the least discounting Frederick's real achievement, Mehring proves from a careful analysis of the documents that the Prussian king was great precisely because he recognised the economic foundations on which alone he could build up the power of absolutism. Every apparent manifestation of Frederick's " enlightenment " was dictated by this aim. Moreover, it was compatible with the most ruthless suppression of every vestige of intellectual and political freedom. There is no trace of shallow iconoclasm in Mehring's approach to Frederick.

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Every line is dictated by that spirit of scientific integrity which is the hallmark of Marxism. Equally profound is his appraisal of Lessing, that pioneer of true enlightenment in Germany, who preferred the poverty of a literary free-lance career to a comfortable sinecure in the service of reaction. By a careful analysis of each of Lessings' works, Mehring shows how that writer fought the injustices which the petty princes imposed upon the German people (*e.g.*, Minna von Barnhelm: a satire on the Prussian state; Emilia Galotti: the age-old theme of family virtue trampled in the dust by tyranny; "Nathan der Weise": religious toleration a demand of true humanity and not, as in Frederick's case, dictated by the needs of a mercenary army recruited from catholic Southern Germany.) He shows how Lessing strove to free his countrymen from the sordid narrowness of their backward provincialism and how, by bringing to them the living breath of revolutionary rationalism, he cleared the path for the true emancipation of the German genius.

Joseph Kresh points out in his able introduction to this edition that Mehring still retained certain traces of philosophical idealism in his aesthetic theory, a failing which he shared with all the Marxists of his generation, except Lenin and his followers. This limitation, expressed as a Kantian dualism distinguishing "pure art" from propaganda, made him discount the possibilities of a revolutionary, proletarian art (an attitude which is scarcely surprising in the intellectual atmosphere of pre-war German social democracy.) But Mehring firmly believed that the victory of socialism would bring about a matchless cultural revival, and at the same time his negative attitude to contemporary proletarian art only made him redouble his efforts to preserve for the workers the heritage of the past. The profound scholarship of his concrete historical studies places them in the front rank of our own, Marxist heritage. Their importance is even greater to-day than when they were written. To-day, the heirs of Prussian autocracy can no longer even pretend, as did their Wilhelmian precursers, that the culture they have consigned to the flames is compatible with their despotism. To-day, it is even more true than in the black days of 1916 that the German workers, "the heirs of classic philosophy. . . . look like miserable beggars being devoured by vermin." But, to continue Rosa Luxemburg's heroic message, "the iron laws of historical dialectics. . . . will bring it to pass that the beggars, the *geux* of to-day, will again stand up straight and will to-morrow be proud and rugged fighters." And for their struggle, the writings of Franz Mehring, "from which there always rises the same fragrance of a noble and strong attitude towards life," provide a shining and imperishable weapon.

F. D. KLINGENDER.

A Frenchman Interprets Heine

Henri Heine by Edmond Vermeil. (Editions Sociales Internationales.)

TO GAIN AN understanding of national socialism we have to look not only at present-day class relationships in Germany, but also at German history which has given the dictatorship of the most reactionary section of monopoly capital in Germany its peculiar character. To do this we might study books

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of German history. Professor Vermeil, in his book on Heine has adopted a different method; he analyses what a German of a century ago told other nations about his own country.

Heine's situation was in some ways most suitable for him to be an observer of his contemporaries; a German Jew, living as a voluntary exile in Paris from 1830 to 1856, he had contact with all fields of German and French life. Heine had left Germany because, as a baptised Jew and an outspoken Liberal, he had failed to find there either a material or spiritual existence. He suffered under racial prejudice and the reactionary policy imposed upon the German states by Metternich and the Holy Alliance. He felt oppressed and lonely in a country dominated by the philistine and the official. He therefore looked to England and France with the envy and curiosity so typical of many Germans who suffer under oppression in their own country. But once he was abroad, he felt a growing and passionate attachment to his own country. Living between nations, between classes, between cultures, he was the typical intellectual whose strength lay in interpretation and description rather than in constructive thinking. France and Germany; aristocracy, bourgeoisie and working class; romanticism, liberalism and communism—he lived in all of them, criticised them trenchantly at the same time as he tried to combine them into one whole. Suggestive and interesting are Heine's views on English society, French politics and the new working class movement. Striking is his firm conviction in the inevitability of the realisation of communism, whose firm ground he recognised both in the real movement of the workers (Chartism and French Communism) and in the vitality of its philosophy. He prided himself much with this discovery, which he impressed continually upon his readers, though he himself was driven by it to despair, for as an intellectual aristocrat he feared " the masses " and their " equalitarianism." It shows his great insight into his time.

Of more immediate political importance are Heine's interpretations of the Germany he had left. In his account of German philosophy he tried to show to France that Germany had produced in the intellectual field, achievements comparable with the French Revolution. He stresses the national character of German philosophy and religion, the fact that even world-wide ideas such as Christianity have their particular roots in every country. The basis of this German approach he saw in a heathen pantheism. Though suppressed by Christianity, Heine observes that it lived on in Germany's devils and ghosts, to be revived through the medium of Spinoza in the pantheism of Goethe, which is however, blended with the deism of Christianity. Clear and simple, and therefore useful for the layman, are Heine's explanations of the achievements of German rationalism, of Kant and Fichte, whose works he recognised as of revolutionary importance.

The principal emphasis of the book is laid, however, upon Heine's directly political interpretations. Professor Vermeil intends to make Heine "our contemporary." Here, however, the book is treading a dangerous path. Those contributions of Heine which have still to-day a vivid appeal to every German, Heine's trenchant and sarcastic descriptions of the German philistine in his " Atta Troll " and " Germany, A Winter Tale," are hardly mentioned, while much scope is given to Heine's views on the destiny of the German revolutionary movement. But those attempts to transfer to the present day views which were the result of entirely different historical circumstances are necessarily misleading, especially when those aspects of Heine's views which coincide with the views of the Frenchman are given undue importance.

At a time when the German bourgeois revolutionary movement was notorious for its weakness and vagueness, Heine was an advocate of a progressive monarchy, believing in its capacity to form the nation and guide

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the powerful and "destructive" forces of "the masses" whom he feared into the channel of a well-ordered and powerful state. His sympathies were along the lines elaborated later by Lassalle and Bismark. He knew the energies which would be released by a strengthening of the state along these lines, which would turn the Germany which had for centuries been the prey of foreign intervention, into a danger to the world. The basic note of his writings is therefore a warning to France to be on its guard against the German "revolution," for this development was the only kind of revolution he was able to envisage in Germany:

> Be on your guard! I wish you well, and therefore I am telling you the bitter truth. You have to fear more from a liberated Germany, than from the entire Holy Alliance, including its Croats and Cossacks. For one thing, you are not liked in Germany. . . . And if we once desire to take up the struggle with you we won't be short of sound reasons. . . . I was really terrified, when I recently heard that your ministers intended to disarm France.

Though there is much truth in such warnings with regard to imperialist Germany—and here Heine gives an illuminating analysis of the sources of its strength, well summarised by M. Vermeil—they are certainly not true of a liberated and revolutionary Germany as we conceive it to-day.

This book is in more than one way a very French book. It preaches fear of the German not because he has an imperialist government, but because he is a German. It attributes to Germans a conception of revolution which centres not around social liberation, but imperial domination. With the English, French and Russian revolutions which aimed at social justice, is contrasted the German revolution:

> This aims solely at a triumph over territorial, confessional, political and professional divisions, gradually to perfect internal cohesion with a view of a determined pressure to be exerted upon the surrounding nations, with a view which envisages continental Europe as well as the colonial world. Pangermanism has become the doctrinal programme of the German revolution in the 19th and 20th century. (p. 20.)

Though there is some truth in these words with regard to the bourgeois revolution of Germany, imperialism resulting from such a revolution is not confined to Germany, as M. Vermeil seems to suggest, but found expression as much in the wars against Holland fought during the English Revolution, in conquest of the British Empire, and the conquests of Napoleon, the formation of the French Empire. The aim of the German revolution in the 20th century is the defeat and not the victory of imperialism. And it is, to say the least, misleading even to suggest that National Socialism is a revolution, when it is the brutal triumph of reaction leading the German nation to destruction.

To speak of "the French" and the "Germans" without reference to time and circumstances is necessarily misleading. It leads to a wrong analysis of the aims of the ruling class in democratic states, hinders international solidarity, so essential in the struggle against capitalism, and fails to see one of the most important forces working for peace and freedom—the German revolutionary movement! It will therefore be of great profit to read this book with a historical view, and with a view to understanding more of the ideological and historical basis of German imperialism. To take it, as it is presented, as a "contemporary" will be highly dangerous.

WALTER CRAMER.

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Contents :

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W. E. LE GROS CLARK

PROTOPLASM - - - *J. B. S. HALDANE*

NEW PHYSICS AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM
S. I. VAVILOV

ECONOMISTS AND THE ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM
MAURICE DOBB

ON SYMBOLS, MOSTLY MATHEMATICAL - *PAUL DIENES*

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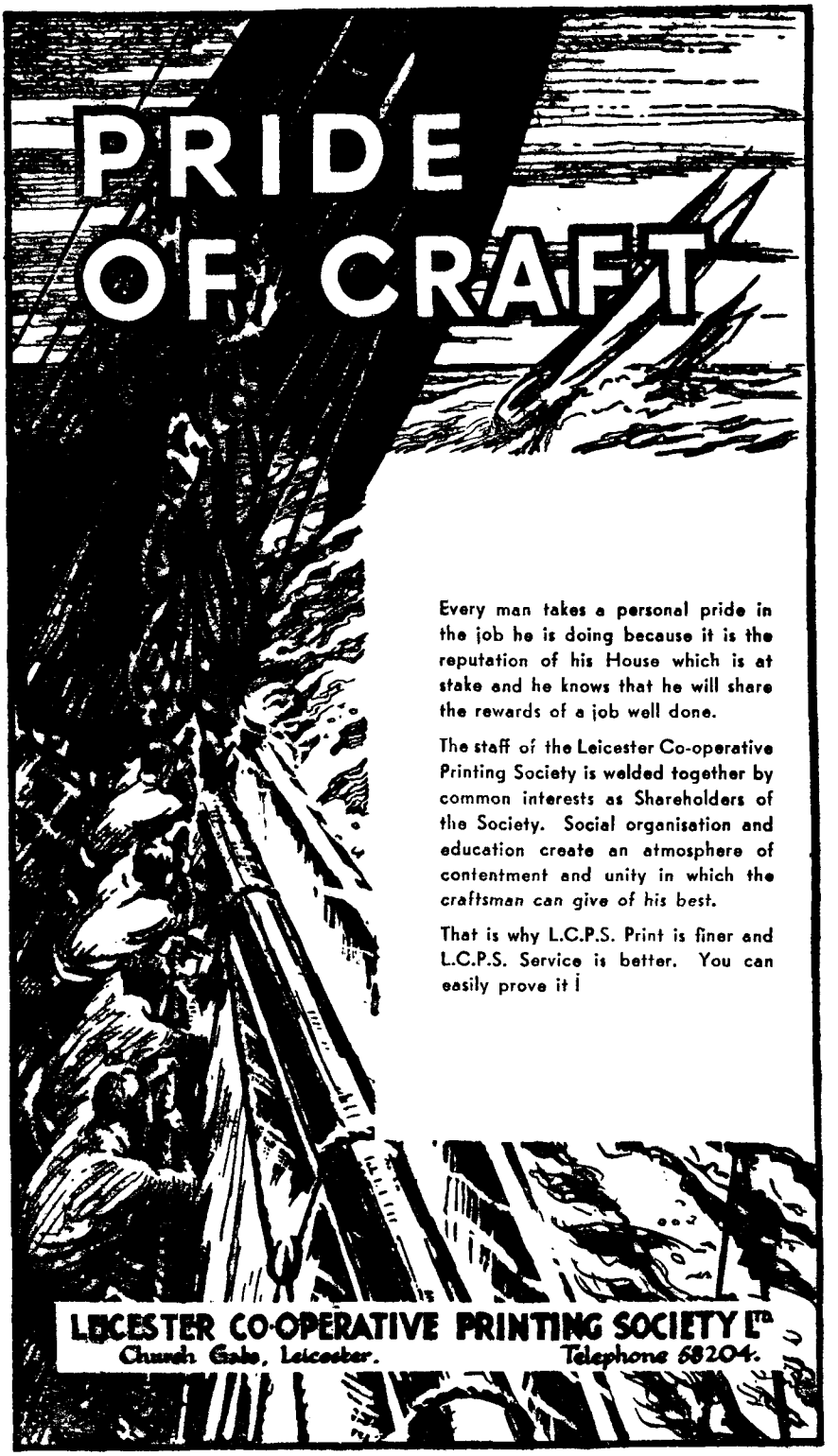
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